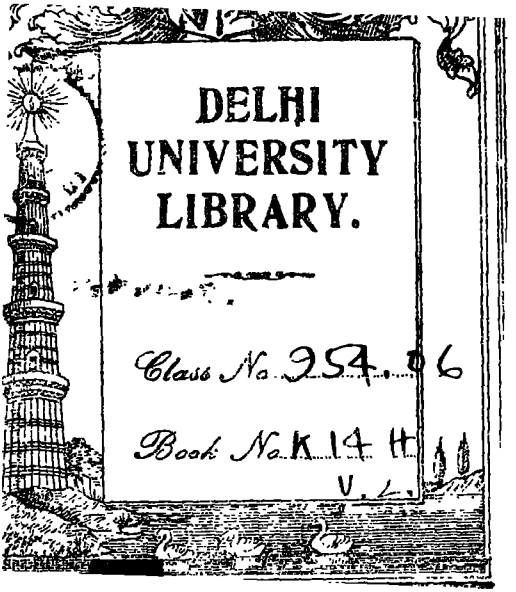

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HISTORY

OF

THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN.

Willshire was to lead the Bombay column down by the western line of the Kojuck and the Bolan.

Such were the intentions both of the Supreme Government and the local authorities, when Prince Timour arrived at Caubul, accompanied by Captain Wade, and the little force that had made good his entry into Afghanistan by the eastern passes. It was on the 3rd of September that Cotton, Burnes, and other British officers, with a guard of honour, went out to receive the Prince. With befitting pomp, the procession made its way through the narrow streets of Caubul to the Balla Hissar; and there were those who said that the gaiety of the heir-apparent and his *cortége* fairly shone down the King's.

Wade had done his duty well. The magnitude of the operations to the westward has somewhat overlaid the more modest pretensions of the march through the eastern passes; and it may be doubted whether the merit of the achievement has ever been fully acknowledged. Viewed as the contribution of the Sikh Government towards the conquest of Afghanistan, it is absolutely contemptible. Runjeet lay dying when the troops were assembling; and his death was announced before they commenced their march. He was the only man in the Sikh empire who was true at heart to his allies, and all genuine co-operation died out with the fires of his funeral pile. To Wade this was embarrassing in the extreme. But the greater the inefficiency of the Sikh demonstration, the greater the praise that is due to the English officer who triumphed over the difficulties thrown in his way by the infidelity of his allies.

Wade found himself at Peshawur with a motley assemblage of Hindoos, Sikhs, and Afghans, on the good faith of a considerable portion of whom it was impossible to rely. The Prince himself was soon found to be an abso-

lute cypher. His most remarkable characteristic was, to speak paradoxically, that he had no character at all. He was a harmless, respectable personage, with an amount of apathy in his constitution which was sometimes advantageous to those in whose hands he placed himself; but which, at others, engendered an amount of impracticability that was very embarrassing and distressing. It was plain that, whatever was to be accomplished, must be accomplished by the energy of the British officers. Left to themselves, the Sikhs, aided by the Afghans who had joined the standard of the Prince, would never have forced the Khybur Pass. This formidable defile was supposed to be, if vigorously defended, impassable; and the long halt at Peshawur had given the Afreedis, if they were not inclined to sell the passage, abundant time to mature their defensive operations, and Akbar Khan, who was coming down from Caubul to oppose the march of Wade and the Sikh auxiliaries, every opportunity of perfecting his plans.

It was not until the 25th of July that Wade and Prince Timour found themselves before Ali-Musjid. The Afreedis, on that and the preceding day, had made some show of resistance; and our troops—the regulars under Captain Farmer, and the irregulars under Lieutenant Mackeson,*—had done good service; whilst Colonel Sheikh Bassawan, with the Sikh auxiliaries, had exhibited an amount of zeal which had won the confidence of the British officers. So closely now did Wade invest the place, so determined was the attitude he had assumed, and so successful was the play of his guns,† that on the

* Mackeson, after doing good service at Bahwulpore, to facilitate the march of the Bengal column of the Army of the Indus, had made his way to Peshawur, where he had joined Colonel Wade. He was, therefore, engaged both in the eastern and western operations.

† Under Lieutenant Barr, of the Bengal Artillery, who has written.

night of the 26th the garrison evacuated the fortress; and on the following morning the allies took possession of Ali-Musjid in the name of the Shah. The Ameer's son had not come down to its defence.

There was little more work for Wade and his auxiliaries. Akbar Khan, who had pitched his camp at Dakha—a place to the south of Jellalabad—had now broken it up and retired to join his father, who had by this time discovered that the greater danger was to be apprehended from the western line of attack, and had therefore recalled his son to the capital. The Shah-zadah and his party, therefore, advanced without further opposition. Opposite Dakha, on the other side of the Caubul river, was the fort of Lalpoorah, where dwelt Sadut Khan, chief of the Momund tribe. His conduct had evinced strong feelings of hostility to the Suddozye Princes. He was now, therefore, to be reduced, and his chiefship conferred on another. Throughout our entire connexion with Afghanistan, it was seldom our good fortune to select fitting objects whereon to lavish our bounty. It was generally, indeed, our lot to set up the wrong man. But the case of Torabaz Khan, who was appointed to the chiefship of Lalpoorah, was one of the few fortunate exceptions to this calamitous rule. In this man we found a faithful ally; and when misfortunes overtook us, he was not unmindful of the benefits he had received at our hands.[a]

On the 3rd of September, Wade and the Shah-zadah reached Caubul. The operations of the motley force which they had led through the difficult passes of Eastern Afghanistan have been dwarfed, as I have said, by the more ostentatious exploits of Sir John Keane's bulkier army; but it is not to be forgotten, that it was in no small

a Narrative of Colonel Wade's Operations, to which I would refer the reader for authentic details, conveyed in a pleasant, soldierly manner.

measure owing to the operations of Wade's force that the resistance offered to Keane's army was so slight and so ill-matured. It was long before Dost Mahomed ceased to regard the movement through the Khybur with greater anxiety than that of the main army along the western route. Akbar Khan and his fighting men never met Wade in the field; but they were drawn away from the capital at a time when they might have done good service in the West; and it is in no small measure owing to this division of the Ameer's military strength, that he was unable to offer any effectual resistance to the march of the British army from Candahar. Nor, when we take account of the circumstances which facilitated our success at the outset of the war, ought it ever to be overlooked that Wade, from his forward position at Peshawur, was enabled to open a correspondence with parties at Caubul favourable to the restoration of the monarchy, and to win over many adherents to the Shah before he approached his capital. It was in no small measure owing to Wade's diplomacy, carried on mainly through the agency of Gholam Khan, Populzye, that the Kohistanees were induced to rise against the Ameer.* These were important services. Wade carried on the work with much address; and there were able men associated with him.† But the whole affair was a melancholy illustration of the lukewarmness, if not of the positive infidelity, of our Sikh allies. It was plain that, thenceforth, we were to expect little from their alliance, but ill-concealed attempts to thwart and baffle the policy to which they were parties.

The month of September passed pleasantly over the

* See Shahamat Ali's "Sikhs and Afghans"; also Mohun Lal's Life of Dost Mahomed. The authority of the former, who must have translated the letters into Persian, is all-sufficient on such a point as this.

† Mackeson, Lord, and Cunningham.

heads of the officers of the Army of the Indus. The fine climate, the fair scenery, and the delicious fruits of Caubul, were all things to be enjoyed, after the sufferings and privations of the long and toilsome march from Hindostan. Then there were shows, and spectacles, and amusements. The troops were reviewed; and the officers rode races; and the Shah, ever delighting in pageantry and parade, established an order of knighthood, and held a grand Durbar, at which the ceremony of investure was performed with becoming dignity and grace. And the officers, happy in the belief that they were soon about to turn their backs on Afghanistan for ever, went about purchasing memorials of their visit to Caubul, or presents to carry back to their friends.

But the hopes of many were doomed to disappointment. On the 18th of September, the Bombay column commenced its march to India, by the route of the Kojuck and the Bolan; and it was believed that a large portion of the Bengal troops would soon be in motion towards the provinces, along the eastern country just traversed by Colonel Wade. A country in which wine was selling at the price of 300 rupees a dozen, and cigars at a rupee a piece,* was not one in which the officers of the army were likely to desire to pitch their tents for a sojourn of any long continuance. When, therefore, it began to be reported among them that the original intentions of withdrawing the troops, with the exception of a single brigade, had been abandoned, there was a general feeling of disappointment. The official order was looked for with anxiety; and on the 2nd of October it appeared.† The principal portion of

* These were the prices fetched at the sale of the effects of Brigadier Arnold, who died at Caubul in the month of September.

† I may as well append the most important portion of it:

"*G. O. October* 2.—The whole of the 1st (Bengal) Division of Infantry, the 2nd (Bengal) Cavalry, and No. 6 Light Field Battery,

the division was to be left in Afghanistan, under Sir Willoughby Cotton; and only a comparatively small detachment was to march to the provinces with Sir John Keane. A week afterwards, orders were issued for the disposition of the troops, and the military occupation of Afghanistan was complete.*

A change so great as this in the military arrangements, consequent on the restoration of Shah Soojah, could only have been brought about by a belief in the presence of some new and pressing danger. Dost Mahomed had been driven across the Hindoo-Koosh; but it was believed that he might there be hospitably received by some of the petty Oosbeg chiefs, between Bameean and Balkh; and that he might, united with them, gather sufficient strength to encourage him to turn his face again towards the South,

will continue in Afghanistan, and a detachment of 30 Sappers, under an Engineer officer. Major-General Sir W. Cotton will command the troops in Afghanistan, and all reports to be made to him after the 10th instant.

"The 2nd Troop, 2nd Brigade Bengal Horse Artillery, her Majesty's 16th Lancers, the 3rd Light Cavalry, 4th Local Horse, the remainder of the Sappers and Miners, a Company of 20th N.I., with Captain Farmer's Company 21st N.I., and the detachment now in progress to head-quarters, under Captain Hopkins, 27th N.I., will move towards Hindostan on such day and order as will be hereafter issued."

* "*G. O. October* 9.—Her Majesty's 13th Light Infantry, three guns of No. 6 Light Field Battery, and the 35th N.I., to remain at Caubul, and to be accommodated in the Balla Hissar.

"The 48th N.I., the 4th Brigade, and detachment of Sappers and Miners and 2nd Cavalry, with a Ressalah of Skinner's Horse, to be cantoned at Jellalabad.

"Ghuznee to be garrisoned by the 16th N.I., a Ressalah of Skinner's Horse, and such details of his Majesty Shah Soojah's as are available. The whole to be under the command of Major M'Laren.

"Candahar will have for its garrison the 42nd, 43rd N.I., 4th Company 2nd Battalion Artillery, a Ressalah of the 4th Local Horse, and such details of his Majesty Shah Soojah's troops as may be available. Major-General Nott will command."

and to sweep down upon the country which had been wrested from him.' It had not, at first, been conceived that the prospect of the Ameer's recovery from the heavy blow which had descended upon him, was sufficiently imminent to indicate the necessity of making any preparations upon a large scale to arrest his return to Afghanistan. But it was considered expedient to send a detachment of the Shah's troops, with some field artillery, to Bameean, the extreme frontier station of the Shah's dominions. Accordingly, on the 12th of September, a detachment had marched for the Hindoo-Koosh. A troop of Native Horse Artillery, which had just come in from Candahar, formed the most remarkable portion of this little force. The difficulties of the road to be traversed were such as no European artillery had ever before encountered.* But, in spite of this, the 4th troop, 3rd Brigade of Horse Artillery, under Lieutenant Murray Mackenzie (leaving its captain dead at Caubul), made good its way to Bameean; and the Shah's Goorkha regiment, with other irregular details, accompanied it to its dreary winter-quarters in the mountainous recesses of the great Caucasian range.

Upon the policy of this movement I cannot pause to speculate. I believe that the system of planting small detachments in isolated positions was one of the great errors which marked our military occupation of Afghanistan. But something more was designed than this. It

* The Envoy said, that as Dost Mahomed had sent guns over the same road to Bameean, there was no reason why our guns should not go. The Doctor-General Harlan boasted that he had crossed the Hindoo-Koosh with artillery. But Macnaghten had not considered that the guns which Dost Mahomed sent along these roads were three-pounders, whilst ours were six-pounders. The troop came along the wheel-track of the Ameer's guns, and reported "the breadth between the wheels less than half of that of ours."

was in contemplation to send a larger force to explore the mountains of the Hindoo-Koosh. Dr. Percival Lord, who had been one of Burnes's companions on the "Commercial Mission" to Caubul, had just returned to the Afghan capital with the force under Colonel Wade; and now that it was considered desirable to despatch a political officer to the Oosbeg frontier, it was but natural that Lord, who had visited the neighbourhood of Koondooz in 1837-1838, should have been selected for the duty. Lord went; but had not been long absent from Caubul when he returned, with exaggerated stories of the success of Dost Mahomed among the petty chiefs of the Hindoo-Koosh, and of a great movement which was about to be made for the re-establishment of the supremacy of the Ameer. Upon this, Macnaghten, who had begun to doubt the extreme popularity of Shah Soojah, and the safety of confiding his protection and support to the handful of British troops which it was originally intended to leave in Afghanistan, made a requisition to Sir John Keane for a stronger military force, and turned Dr. Lord's story to account in the furtherance of his own views.

It was easy to issue orders for the maintenance of a large body of British troops in Afghanistan; but it was not so easy to house the regiments thus maintained. The winter was before them. They could not remain encamped on the plain around Caubul. It became, therefore, matter of anxious consideration how accommodation was to be provided for so large a body of regular troops. The subject, indeed, had pressed upon the attention of the political and military chiefs before the brigade, which was originally to have been left in the country, had swelled into a division; and the engineer officers had been called into council, and had given the only advice that was likely to emanate from competent military authority. Lieutenant Durand—a gallant soldier and an able scientific officer—

saw at once the importance of posting the troops in the Balla Hissar.* And there, in the winter of that year, they were posted, to be removed in the following autumn to the fatal cantonments which by that time were springing up on the plain.

The city of Caubul is situated between two ranges of lofty hills, along the ridges of which run lines of loop-holed walls, with here and there small obtruding towers, or bastions, too weak and too extended to be serviceable for purposes of defence. It is said to be about three miles in circumference. The Balla Hissar stands on a hill, overlooking the city. There are, strictly speaking, two Balla Hissars; the lower of which, on our first entry into Caubul, was in a rickety and decayed state, and could not have stood for an hour against British artillery. Both were commanded by the walled hills above them. The upper Balla Hissar, or citadel, commands the whole of the city and the suburbs. The lower Balla Hissar, which is surrounded by a shallow but rather deep ditch, commands only part of one of the bazaars—the Shore bazaar—two large forts (Mahmoud Khan's and the Beenee Hissar), and the road to Jellalabad. The houses of the town are mostly flat-roofed; the streets for the most part narrow and tortuous. The most important feature of it is the great bazaar, built, or commenced, by Ali Murdan Khan—a mart for the produce of all the nations of the East.†

* The importance of this subject is so great, when viewed in connexion with the melancholy history of our subsequent disasters, that I cannot do better than give, in the Appendix, an account, which originally appeared in the *Calcutta Review*, of the difficulties thrown in the way of the engineers—an account, the authenticity of which is not to be questioned.

† The picturesque aspects of Caubul are well described by Lieutenant Rattray: "It is well-built and handsome, and is one mass of bazaars. Every street has a double row of houses of different heights, flat-roofed, and composed of mud in wooden frames. Here and there a larch porch

The Bombay division of the Army of the Indus marched from Caubul on the 18th of September; and on the 15th of October, Sir John Keane, with the troops destined for Bengal, set out for the provinces by way of the eastern passes. The Shah had by this time begun to think of escaping from the severity of the Caubul winter, and reposing in the milder climate and more tranquil neighbourhood of Jellalabad. The sweets of restored dominion had not gratified him to the extent of his anticipations. He was, indeed, a disappointed man. He sighed as he declared that the Caubul he had revisited was not the Caubul of his youth; his kingdom seemed to have shrivelled and collapsed; and even of these shrunken dominions, fettered and controlled as he was, he was only half a king. It was plain that, in the eyes of his subjects, his connexion with the Feringhees had greatly humiliated him. But he wanted the English money and the English bayonets, and was compelled to bear the burden.

Macnaghten was to accompany the King to Jellalabad;

of carved wood intervenes, giving entrance to the court-yard of the residences of the nobles, in the centre of which is a raised platform of mud, planted with fruit-trees, and spread with carpets. A fountain plays near; and here, during the heat of the day, loll the chiefs at ease, listening, as they smoke their pipes, to the sound of the 'saceringhi,' or guitar, the falling water, or the wonderful tales of the Persian story-teller. The houses overhang the narrow streets; their windows have no glass, but consist of lattice-work wooden shutters, which push up and down, and are often richly carved and otherwise ornamented. The shop windows are open to the sun, and the immense display of merchandise, fruits, game, armour, and cutlery defies description. These articles are arranged in prodigious piles from floor to ceiling; in the front of each sits the artificer engaged in his calling, or from amidst the heaped-up profusion peeps out the trader at his visitors. The grand bazaar (Char Chouk, or Chutta) has a substantial roof, built in four arcades, which are decorated with painted panels, now nearly indistinct, and originally watered by cisterns and fountains which are neglected and dried up."

in the system, Moollah Shikoré and his deputies would soon have given it its death-blow.

But though feeble in other respects, this Moollah Shikoré was not feeble in his hatred of the British. The minister oppressed the people. The people appealed to the British functionaries. The British functionaries remonstrated with the minister. And the minister punished the people for appealing.* The Shah and the Moollah chafed under the interference of the British. But they loved the British money; and they required the support of the British bayonets. And so bravely for a time worked the double government at Caubul.

Whilst such was the state of things at the supreme seat of government, there was little less to create dissatisfaction in the internal administration of Candahar. The principal revenue officers were two Shecahs, the sons of that Hussein Khan, the obnoxious minister whom Shah Zemaun had put to death. Their names were Mahomed Takee Khan and Wulloo Mahomed Khan. Cradled in intense enmity to the Douranees, they had grown into unscrupulous persecutors of the tribes. Selected by the Barukzye Sirdars as willing agents of those humiliating and enfeebling measures by which

* "Every day complaints were made to us, and we permitted ourselves to interfere, by giving notes to the complainants, requesting the Moollah to settle their cases; but this did no good, for, instead of having redress to their grievances, they were beaten, and sometimes confined, for coming and complaining to us against the Shah's authority. All the chiefs or heads of tribes received their allowances from certain villages, by obtaining an order from Moollah Shikore. If there was any man among them known to us, and whom we would wish to favour, the Moollah took care to annoy and vex him, by giving him an order to a distant village for such sums which he would likely spend during his journey; or else to poor villages, where there was very little chance of gaining anything."—[*Mohun Lal's Life of Dost Mahomed.*]

they sought to extinguish the vitality of the Douranees, they entered upon their work in a ruthless and uncompromising spirit, and plied the instruments of their office with remarkable success for the persecution and degradation of their enemies. The hatred with which the Douranees regarded these men was too deep to suffer them to embrace with complacency any measures, however conciliatory in themselves, of which the old Barukzye tools were the executors. Such unpopular agents were enough to render distasteful the most popular measures. The Douranees were, indeed, greatly disappointed. Do what they would, they could not obtain a paramount influence in the state. The door was closed against them by the British janitors who kept watch around the palace; and the chiefs soon began to chafe under the foreign intrusion which deprived them of all ascendancy in the councils of the restored monarch, and prevented them from regaining the full extent of those financial privileges which they had enjoyed under his Suddozye predecessors.*

* "Immediately consequent on his Majesty's accession, certain feelings began to take root among the Douranees, in connexion with the presence of British troops, which promised ill for the future tranquillity of the country. Several of the most influential chiefs accompanied the Court from Candahar to Caubul and Jellalabad; and although it must have been with feelings of gratified pride that they beheld the leader of their order—their *Shah Baba*, or Father King, as he was familiarly named—seated upon the throne of his ancestors, yet it is also not unreasonable to suppose that their mortification must have been great at finding that they no longer possessed a dominant voice in the royal councils, or the ability, as formerly, to render the sovereign the victim of their intrigues, and that this conviction of their political influence being for ever superseded, must have led them to value the many personal advantages they had gained by the restoration, and to regard with peculiar hostility the intruders upon their fancied rights. At Candahar the progress of events had the same tendency to render the Douranees discontented, if not actually inimical. The chiefs who had

treachery; and that during the passage of the British army through Beloochistan, he was continually molesting our advancing columns. It was the fashion to attribute to the wickedness of Mehrab Khan all the sufferings which afflicted the Army of the Indus on its march to Candahar, the scarcity which pressed so heavily upon man and beast, and the depredations of the marauding Beloochees. The very barrenness of the country, indeed, was by some laid at his door. It was not very clearly seen, at this time, that the Army of the Indus was at least as much the cause, as it was the victim of the scarcity in Beloochistan. When our troops passed through the dominions of the Khan of Khelat, there was already, as has been shown by Burnes's admissions, a scarcity in the land; and our vast moving camp increased it. The safe passage of the Bolan Pass was effected through the friendly agency of the Brahoo chief. And we have it emphatically, upon the authority of Macnaghten, that the progress of the Army of the Indus through the country of Mehrab Khan was attended by much devastation—that a great injury was inflicted upon the people—and that nothing would have been easier than for the Khan to have destroyed our entire force. Such was the language of our diplomatists up to the end of March; but in April, Burnes recommended the castigation of the Khan of Khelat; and Mehrab Khan was doomed to be stripped, on the first convenient opportunity, of his territory, and deprived either of his liberty or his life. 'The evidence of Mehrab Khan's treachery is not sufficiently strong to satisfy me that the British righteously confiscated his principality and sacrificed his life.' He was surrounded by traitors. When his stronghold was entered, it was seen that the servants he had trusted had the means of betraying their master; and it was clear, to all who investigated the charges against him with judicial impartiality, that he had been betrayed.

It was clear that many of the offences imputed to him were to be ascribed rather to the machinations of his secret enemies than to his own enmity and bad faith. But he had been early doomed to destruction. The recommendations of the British diplomatists in Afghanistan had been adopted by the Governor-General; and the deposition of Mehrab Khan, and the annexation of Shawl, Moostung, and Cutchee, had been decreed in the Simlah Council Chamber.* It was true that Shah Soojah had, in the hour of need, been succoured by Mehrab Khan. A statesman in whom the kindly instincts of humanity were so strong as in Lord Auckland, was not likely to forget the obligations which so essential a service at such a time imposed upon the restored monarch.† But the graceful suggestion of the Governor-General was lost; and the Khan lived just long enough to curse himself for his folly in having opened his arms

* In his minute of August 20, Lord Auckland wrote on this subject: —"Mr. Macnaghten has authority, as respects the Khelat territories, to declare the annexation of the provinces of Shawl, Moostung, and Cutch Gundava to the Afghan dominions; and I have but to add, that it is my strong opinion that no power should be left in the hands of Mehrab Khan, who has shown himself our bitter and deceitful enemy, wholly unworthy of our confidence. For this object, it will, I conceive, be sufficient to occupy Khelat itself, and to hold it and the districts adjacent, in addition to Moostung and Shawl, under our provisional management or superintendence, for the very short period that will elapse, until it may be seen what final arrangement can be made respecting it, either by bringing it also under the direct rule of the Shah, or placing the claimant, Shah Newaz Khan (or any other Beloochee chief), in possession of it."—[*MS. Records.*]

† "As to Mehrab Khan himself, he may have claims upon Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk, arising out of the important succour given to his Majesty in his expedition in 1834, and Mr. Macnaghten will naturally not fail to second any proposition of a liberal personal support to the chief which the Shah may be disposed to make, in generous acknowledgment of those services."—[*Lord Auckland's Minute: August* 20, 1839. *MS. Records.*]

to receive the Suddozye pretender, when he fled, baffled and beaten, from the battle-field of Candahar. For that act of hospitality he paid, five years afterwards, with his life.

Whether any thoughts of this kind arose to dash the pleasure of those who toasted the victors of Khelat at Avitabile's dinner-table, can only be conjectured; but all present acknowledged that the capture of Mehrab Khan's stronghold was a great military exploit. The native soldiery are said to have esteemed it more highly than the capture of Ghuznee, for they had been wisely allowed to participate in the honour of the exploit. Sir John Keane had been much censured for composing his storming column entirely of European companies. The exclusiveness of the act seemed to imply mistrust in his Sepoy regiments, and did not raise the General in the estimation of their officers. It was a subject, therefore, of general congratulation throughout the Company's army, that a Native regiment had shared with two of the Ghuznee storming corps the glory of the assault upon Khelat, and had proved themselves well worthy of the confidence that had been placed in them.

And so Sir John Keane and General Willshire returned to India. The "Army of the Indus" was broken up, and soon there came from England the welcome announcement that the successes of the campaign had been duly appreciated by the Sovereign, and the chief actors duly rewarded. Lord Auckland was created an Earl; Sir John Keane rose up as Baron Keane of Ghuznee; Mr. Macnaghten took his place in history as Sir William Macnaghten, Baronet; Colonel Wade became thenceforth Sir Claude Wade, Knight; and a shower of lesser distinctions, of brevets and Bath-honours, descended upon the working officers, whose gallantry had contributed so largely to the success of this memorable campaign.

CHAPTER II.

[January—September: 1840.]

The Great Game in Central Asia—The Russian Expedition to Khiva—Apprehensions of Burnes—Colonel Stoddart—Affairs on the Hindoo-Koosh—Failure of the Russian Expedition—Conduct of the Sikhs—Herat and Yar Mahomed—Mission of Abbott and Shakespear—Disturbances in the Ghilzye Country—Fall of Khelat—Arthur Conolly.

THE King and the Envoy spent the winter at Jellalabad. There was something like a lull in Afghanistan. When the snow is on the ground the turbulence of the Afghans is wont to subside.* The time was favourable for the consideration of revenue matters, and Macnaghten began to inquire into the expenditure and the resources of the kingdom. The inquiry was not a satisfactory one. It was obvious that the government could be carried on only by the extraction of large sums from the treasury

* The winter, however, was not wholly unproductive of military events. A detachment was sent out under Colonel Orchard to reduce the fort of Pushoot, which lies some fifty miles to the north-east of Jellalabad, and to expel the "refractory chief" of the surrounding district. The affair was a successful failure. Repeated attempts were made by the Engineer, Pigou, to blow in the gate, after the Ghuznee fashion; but the heavy rains had damaged the powder, which was naturally bad; and every effort was unsuccessful. As there was no hope of effecting an entrance in this manner; as Abbott and his artillery had vainly exhausted their ammunition, and a considerable number of our men had fallen under the fire of the fort, Orchard drew off the assailants. Soon after their withdrawal, however, the enemy evacuated the place.

of India; and Macnaghten was continually urging the Supreme Government to authorise the expenditure of these large sums of money, and continually exhorting the authorities in the north-western provinces to send him all the treasure they could spare.

But there was much in the state of our foreign relations at this time to distract the thoughts of the minister from the affairs of the home department. The Russian question was now forcing itself again upon our Indian statesmen. Even before the Court turned its back upon Caubul, tidings had been received, in the first instance from Pottinger at Herat, which left little room to doubt that a Russian force was about to set out from Orenburgh on an expedition into Central Asia. The immediate object of this movement was to threaten the state of Khiva, which had long been throwing obstacles in the way of Russian commerce, and carrying off Russian subjects into hopeless captivity. Russia had been prosecuting an extensive trade with the countries of Central Asia; but the state of Khiva which borders on the country occupied by the Kerghiz Cossacks, was now declared by the Russian Government to be "daily harassing the wandering tribes that encamp on our frontiers, interrupting the intercourse the other states of Asia keep up with us, detaining the caravans of Bokhara on their way to and from Russia, obliging them to pay extravagant duties, and compelling them by main force to pass through its territory, and there seizing a considerable portion of their merchandise." "These insults to foreigners, holding commercial intercourse with Russia, are, however," continues the Russian state-paper—the manifesto of the Government of the Czar, declaring the grounds of their expedition into Central Asia—"of less importance than the attacks which have been made on Russian caravans. Not one of these can now cross the

desert without danger. It was in this manner that a Russian caravan from Orenburgh, with goods belonging to our merchants, was pillaged by the armed bands of Khiva. No Russian merchant can now venture into that country without running the risk of losing his life or being made a prisoner. The inhabitants of Khiva are constantly making incursions into that part of the country of the Kerghiz which is at a distance from our lines, ... and to crown all these insults, they are detaining several thousand Russian subjects in slavery. The number of these unfortunate wretches increases daily, for the peaceful fishermen on the banks of the Caspian are continually attacked and carried off as slaves to Khiva."

Here were plainly and intelligibly set forth the injuries committed by the state of Khiva against the subjects of the Russian Government, and the grounds on which the latter called for redress. Every attempt, it was stated, to obtain satisfaction for these wrongs, by reason and persuasion, had failed. It was necessary, therefore, to resort to more decisive measures. "Every means of persuasion," continued the manifesto, "has now been exhausted. The rights of Russia, the security of her trade, the tranquillity of her subjects, and the dignity of the state, call for decisive measures; and the Emperor has judged it to be time to send a body of troops to Khiva, to put an end to robbery and exaction, to deliver those Russians who are detained in slavery, to make the inhabitants of Khiva esteem and respect the Russian name, and finally to strengthen in that part of Asia the lawful influence to which Russia has a right, and which alone can insure the maintenance of peace. This is the purpose of the present expedition; and as soon as it shall be attained, and an order of things conformable to the interests of Russia and the neighbouring Asiatic states shall be established

on a permanent footing, the body of troops which has received orders to march on Khiva will return to the frontiers of the empire."

The *casus belli* was here laid down with sufficient distinctness, and the facts stated in the manifesto were not to be denied. But it was believed that Russia had other objects in view than the liberation of her slaves and the safety of her commerce; and that if the British army had not occupied Afghanistan, this manifesto would not have been issued by the Czar. It was regarded, indeed, as a counter-movement called forth by our own advance; and candid men could allege nothing against it on the score of justice or expediency. There was something suspicious in the time and manner of its enunciation. But there was less of aggression and usurpation in it than in our own manifesto. The movement was justified by the law of nations. There was outwardly something, indeed, of positive righteousness in it, appealing to the best instincts of our nature. And, if there were behind all this outside show of humanity a politic desire to keep in check a rival power, that was now intruding in countries far beyond its own line of frontier, it can only be said that our own movement into Afghanistan was directed against a danger of the same kind, but of much less substantial proportions.

But the expedition of Russia into Central Asia excited the alarm of our statesmen in Afghanistan, though it did not rouse their indignation. There was, at all events, in it much food for anxious consideration. It was the one great subject of thought and topic of discussion in the winter of 1839-1840. Burnes, who was left in control at Caubul, whilst Macnaghten was with the Shah at Jellalabad, now, with the snow around him, found himself in the enjoyment of a season of comparative leisure, able both to think and to write. "What a year has

been the past," he wrote to a friend at Bombay, on the 19th of November—"not to me, I mean, but to our affairs in the East. Further submission to what was going on, and our days of supremacy in the East, were numbered. As it is, we have brought upon ourselves some additional half-million of annual expenditure, and, ere 1840 ends, I predict that our frontiers and those of Russia will touch—that is, the states dependent upon either of us will—and that is the same thing. . . . . Every week brings fresh business; and all the world will now have it that Russia has advanced on Khiva. What of that? She has the right to relieve her enslaved countrymen; and if she have the power, why should she have so long hesitated? But the time she has chosen for this blow is an awkward one. I hold, however, that the man who recommends the cantonment of a British or an Indian soldier west of the Indus is an enemy to his country." *

After the lapse of a month, Burnes wrote again to another correspondent, more emphatically, on the same subject:

> But everything past and present has been cast into the shade by the expedition which the Russians have now pushed into Central Asia. I have known of it for eight weeks past, and had numerous and authentic reports concerning their waggons, their *matériel*, &c., &c., all of which are on a grand scale, giving rise to serious apprehensions that their plans are not confined to the chastisement of the petty Khan of Khiva; indeed, our policy at Herat is already out of joint, and we have reason to know that Russia from Khiva looks to that city. Her attack on Khiva is justified by all the laws of nations; and in a country like England, where slave-dealing is so odiously detested, ought to find favour in men's eyes rather than blame. Yet the time chosen wears a bad appearance, if it at once does not lead to the inference that Russia has put forth her forces merely to counteract our policy.
>
> *MS. Correspondence.*

clude a friendly treaty with the Ameer. His reception, though marked by some caprice, was not altogether uncourteous. He was very ignorant of the customs of the country, and was inclined to resent as insults the exaction of formalities in accordance with the ordinary usages of Bokhara. He seems to have made no effort to win the favour of the barbarous monarch by the adoption of a conciliatory demeanour; but somehow or other he scrambled through the first ceremonials without giving the Commander of the Faithful any mortal offence.

But it would appear that he soon excited the bitter enmity of the Reiss, or minister. His letters had been addressed to the predecessor of this man. The old minister had been disgraced whilst Stoddart was on his way to Bokhara, and the new man was little inclined to regard with favour the Feringhee who had sought the protection of the old. In a very short time, Stoddart, having been invited to the residence of the Reiss, was suddenly seized, thrown to the ground, bound with cords, and threatened with death by the minister himself, who stood over him with a long knife. He was then carried out, on a dark rainy night, into the streets, hurried from place to place, by torchlight, and at last lowered down by ropes into a dark well, swarming with the most nauseous vermin, to be the companion of murderers and thieves. In this wretched dungeon, weakened both in body and in mind by long-continued suffering, he consented outwardly to conform to the ceremonials of the Mahomedan faith.

After two months of extreme suffering, Stoddart was released from this dreadful dungeon. The chief officer of police then received him into his house; and from this time, throughout the year 1839, though subject to the caprices of a tyrannous monarch and an unscrupulous minister, and the insults of barbarians of less note, his condition on the whole was bettered. The success of the

British in Afghanistan seemed for a time to awaken the Ameer to a just sense of the power of the British nation, and Stoddart rose into importance at the Bokhara Court, as the agent of a powerful state, capable of exercising a mighty influence over the destinies of Central Asia. But the caprices of this barbarous potentate were great. The smiles of to-day were followed by the cruelties of the morrow. Stoddart continued a prisoner at Bokhara; and Macnaghten, sympathising with the sufferings of a brave officer, and eager to chastise the insolent barbarity of the petty Central-Asian tyrant, again contemplated the despatch of a brigade across the mountains of the Hindoo-Koosh.

It was necessary, however, to tread cautiously on this ground. There were more reasons than one why Macnaghten, at this time, turned his thoughts towards Bokhara. Dost Mahomed had sought an asylum at the Ameer's Court.* The "Commander of the Faithful," as this rude Mussulman potentate ostentatiously termed himself, received the fugitive with open arms. For a little while he lavished upon the fallen Prince all the benignities of oriental hospitality; and then laid his heavy hand upon him, and made him a prisoner.

"It seems certain that the Dost has got into bad odour at Bokhara," wrote Macnaghten to Burnes, on the 20th of February, "and it is very improbable that the two

* Finding that he had little hope of so establishing his influence among the petty Oosbeg states, as to enable him, with their assistance, to make an effort to regain his lost dominions, the Ameer had contemplated a flight into the Persian territories. But the Governor of Balkh intercepted the fugitive, and invited him to that place. Jubbar Khan went on the part of the Ameer, and was detained until the arrival of Dost Mahomed himself. Then the Ameer was informed that the Khan of Bokhara desired the presence at his capital of the ex-ruler of Caubul. Sorely perplexed, and almost helpless, but not without some misgivings, Dost Mahomed then went to Bokhara.

Ameers-ool-Moomuneen will ever act cordially together." It was the policy of our British diplomatists, at this time, to keep the two Ameers in a state of disunion and antagonism. But the very course which Macnaghten was disposed to pursue towards Bokhara, was that of all others which was most surely calculated to cement an alliance between them. A military expedition against Bokhara would, in all probability, have induced the Khan to release Dost Mahomed, and to supply him with the means of crossing the frontier at the head of an imposing body of fighting men, and, aided by the Wullee of Khooloom and other chiefs of the Oosbeg hill states, making an effort to regain his lost dominions. There was something, too, in the alleged cause of Dost Mahomed's confinement at Bokhara, which made Macnaghten waver still more in his determination to send an army across the Hindoo-Koosh, and suggested to him the expediency of devoting himself to the furtherance of objects of another kind. It was said that the Ameer of Bokhara was greatly incensed by Dost Mahomed's practical refusal to summon his family to that city. They had remained under the charge of Jubbar Khan, in the hospitable territory of the Wullee of Khooloom; and it was reported that the Khan of Bokhara had declared, that if they sought the protection of the British Government, he would destroy Dost Mahomed. But Jubbar Khan was well disposed at this time to seek from the British an honourable asylum for his brother's family; and the question of their reception was earnestly pondered by Macnaghten, and discussed with the Shah. In the middle of February, he wrote to Burnes, from Jellalabad, that although common hospitality required that an asylum should not be refused to persons "in so distressed a plight as the Dost's family;" but that, at the same time, common prudence required that in the exercise of this office of humanity, we should not expose ourselves

to the machinations of perfidious enemies. He suggested therefore, that Dr. Lord, in reply to any request on the subject, should say that a safe and honourable asylum would be granted to the Ameer's family on condition of their residing wherever our government might think proper to locate them.

But stolid, selfish, and remorseless towards his enemies, Shah Soojah was not easily to be persuaded that either humanity or policy demanded that he should grant an asylum or a maintenance to Dost Mahomed's family, and declared that nothing short of absolute force would induce him to contribute a rupee towards their support. The vicissitudes of his past life had only hardened the King's heart, and often as he had sought an "asylum" himself, he had now, in the day of prosperity, no bowels of compassion for the fugitive and the suppliant. On the English envoy, however, the obduracy of Shah Soojah had little effect, and he still declared that the family of Dost Mahomed were entitled to kind and honourable treatment at our hands. This justice and humanity required, whilst it seemed also to Macnaghten to be sound policy to hold out every inducement to the Ameer to commit his family to our charge. In that case, he wrote to Burnes, the Shah of Bokhara could make no use of Dost Mahomed, and the objection to the movement into Toorkistan would be obviated. "Let us examine," he added, "what we are to gain by such a movement, and upon what principles it should be conducted. The first thing to be gained is the punishment of the Shah of Bokhara, for his frequent and outrageous violation of the law of nations, and the release of our agent, Colonel Stoddart, who, without some exertion on our part, will, it is likely, be doomed to incarceration for life. I suppose the expedition to be conveniently feasible, if entered upon at the proper season of the year. What Timour Shah effected, we can do; and with proper

arrangement we may either enlist on our side, or keep neutral, the chiefs between us and Bokhara. If we compelled the Shah of Bokhara to release Stoddart, to evacuate all the countries on this side of the Oxus, and to pay the expenses of the expedition, we should have achieved all that is desirable." *

The Court remained at Jellalabad up to the third week of April; and the excursive mind of the Envoy was still wandering out in the wild regions beyond the Hindoo-Koosh. It was certain that a Russian army was advancing upon Khiva. In the country about Khooloom the adherents of Dost Mahomed were exciting against us the hostility of the Oosbegs. Jubbar Khan, with the Ameer's family and a large party of retainers, were there. The petty chiefs beyond the mountains were in a state of doubtful vassalage, scarcely knowing whether they were subject to Herat or to Caubul; whether they would recognise the Khan of Bokhara or the Khan of Khiva as their suzerain; or whether they would be, in effect, independent of all.† It was desirable to annex these Cis-Oxus principalities to the territory of the Shah, to strengthen our frontier, and keep them out of the hands of the Bokhara ruler. Already was there a weak detachment wintering amid the inhospitable snows of Bameean. The despatch of a strong brigade to the country beyond was still among

* *Jellalabad, February* 23, 1840. *MS. Correspondence.*

† Mehrab Khan, the Wullee of Maimouna, said to Arthur Conolly, in the autumn of 1840, "My ancestors were content to serve the King of Caubul, and when members of that house fell into misfortune, they found hospitality here. Shah Soojah is again upon his throne at Caubul; but now another Suddozye King calls upon me to submit only to Herat, and your English agent advises me to send my son there. On the other hand, the Commander of the Faithful claims allegiance for Bokhara. The Khan Huzzrut desires me to put myself under him; and you know how I was forced to act when the Persian Asoph-ood-dowlah crossed the Moorghaub."

the cherished projects of the Envoy. Writing from Jellalabad, he turned his back upon the southern passes, and looking out across the northern Caucasian mountains, declared that it was easier to march on Bokhara than to subjugate the tribes of the Khybur. To the Governor of Agra he thus addressed himself on the 1st of April, "A brigade of ours, with a due proportion of artillery, would, I think, from all I have heard, be fully competent to overcome any opposition that could be offered to us between this and Bokhara. I do not think that we should incur the risk of the movement solely for the purpose of reannexing the Cis-Oxus provinces to the dominions of his Majesty Shah Soojah; though if they are not so reannexed, Bokhara, at the instigation of Russia, will certainly assert a real supremacy. At present she has only Balkh and its dependencies, and her sway over that even is but nominal. But we cannot allow Dost Mahomed's family to occupy so commanding a position as Khooloom, close to the Afghan frontier. And may not the contingency upon which the home authorities direct an advance, be said to have arisen should the Russians establish themselves in force at Bokhara?"*

It was, indeed, a great game on which Macnaghten was then intent—a game so vast that the subjugation of the Punjab and Nepaul was regarded as a petty contribution to its success. These grand schemes dazzled him, and he could not see the dangers which grew at his feet.

"I intend," he wrote in the letter above quoted, "sending Arthur Conolly, who has joined me here, and Rawlinson on a mission to Kokan, with a view, if possible, to frustrate the knavish tricks of the *Russe log* in that quarter. Though there are doubtless many of the elements of mischief in this country, yet I should not apprehend any internal explosion, even if the greater portion of our troops

* Sir W. Macnaghten to Mr. Robertson, April 1, 1840.

were withdrawn. Depend upon it we shall never be at our ease in India until we have subjugated the Punjab and Nepaul; and the sooner we can come to a reckoning with our faithful allies the Singhs, the better. They are doing all they can to injure us in this quarter, and are comforting all the rebels and parties disaffected to his Majesty Shah Soojah. We should here have no difficulty in dealing with them in this quarter, and I will venture to say there would not be a disciple of Nanuk on this side the Indus a week after the declaration of hostilities."

As the month advanced, the intelligence from the North was more and more calculated to rivet the opinion entertained by Burnes and others of the success of the Russian expedition.* and Macnaghten began to think

* On the 21st of March, Macnaghten had written to the Agra Governor: "Lord Auckland tells me that the Russian force consists only of 3000 cavalry Cossacks, 800 mounted artillerymen, and twelve light field-pieces; but Burnes tells me that he knows, from good information, that the force is much larger. Let us hope the armada may be dispersed before it reaches Bokhara, whatever may be the strength of it. If the Russians are likely to establish themselves there, we had better be up and doing."—(*MS. Correspondence.*)

But on the 15th of April he wrote from Jellalabad: "You will see from Captain Abbott's report how contemptible is the enemy with which the Russians have to contend, and I fear they will experience no obstacle to their progress all the way to Bokhara. Had we not been here, they would by this time next year have established themselves without the slightest opposition or difficulty in Afghanistan. They appear to have completely gained over (whether by promises or threats) the King of Bokhara, who turns a deaf ear to all our advances."—(*MS. Correspondence.*)

On the 23rd, the Court having then commenced its progress to Caubul, the Envoy wrote in a still less confident strain: "All accounts concur in stating that the Russians have reached Khiva, and I anticipate anything but a bed of roses unless something be done to distract people's attention from the intrigues a-head, by putting a stop to those in our rear. We are now on the field of battle on which Shah Soojah lost his throne in 1810. What must his Majesty's feelings be now?"

that the danger was greater than he had once believed. "Unless," he wrote at the end of April, "Lord Auckland act with vigour and promptitude to secure and open our rear, we shall soon be between two fires—if not under them. France and Russia are advancing with only the remote contingency of profit to stimulate them. We are supine, whilst our inactivity will probably be the cause of our ruin. France gratuitously supplies Persia with 30,000 muskets, at a time when Persia may be said to be at war with us. I cannot, though I have repeatedly and earnestly pressed my request, obtain a single musket."

A fortnight after this letter was written, the Envoy proposed to Burnes that he should proceed on a mission to the Russian camp. "He said, he would willingly go if ordered—but that," added Macnaghten, "is not the spirit which should animate our Elchee;" and the design was abandoned. It must have been very soon after this* that the glad tidings of the break-down of the Russian expedition reached the Court of Shah Soojah. The Envoy had spoken despondingly of the contemptible enemy which the Russian army had to encounter. But there was an enemy of which no account was taken—an enemy that had destroyed one of Napoleon's finest armies, and which was doomed to overthrow utterly our own policy in Central Asia—spreading its toils around Peroffski's advancing columns. The Snow was doing its work.

On the 13th of March, the failure of the expedition was announced in the public journals of St. Petersburgh, and Lord Clanricarde, on the same day, sent the intelligence to Lord Palmerston. The journals announced that the intense cold, the deep snow, and the inaccessibility of the country, had destroyed the camels, and compelled the army to retrace its steps. But the actual truth was worse

* May 10, 1842.

than the newspaper history; for Peroffski's ill-fated army had been attacked by pestilence and famine.

As the year wore on, Macnaghten's difficulties seemed to thicken around him. The failure of the Russian expedition removed one source of inquietude; but it was a remote one. And nearer home, many great dangers were bristling up in his path. Still immersed, however, in foreign politics, the Envoy gave little heed to the domestic troubles which were environing him. His thoughts were continually ranging beyond the limits of Shah Soojah's dominions; and whilst the edifice he had reared was falling to pieces by the force of its own innate corruptness, he was devising measures of external defence.

During the spring and the early summer months two subjects pressed urgently on his attention, and became the burdens of his discourse. The one was the conduct of the Sikhs; the other, the state of affairs at Herat. Ever since the death of Runjeet Singh, the temper of the Lahore Durbar had been such as to impress the Envoy strongly with the conviction that nothing but decisive measures would ever bring our allies to regard the terms of the Tripartite Treaty. The real ruler of the Punjab was the young and impetuous Prince, Nao Nehal Singh, who had almost set aside the authority of his imbecile father, and was longing for the day when he might take more openly and undisguisedly the sceptre into his hands. In every possible way our allies had evaded the stipulations of the treaty. They had rendered no effectual aid to Prince Timour in the operations which, conjointly with Wade, he had undertaken for the recovery of his father's throne. They were making light of the obligation to support a contingent force of Sikh troops on the frontier, in return for the subsidy granted by the treaty; and proof had been afforded that they were engaged in treasonable correspondence with our enemies in Afghan-

istan. It is certain, at least, that they were harbouring at their frontier stations the rebel Ghilzye chiefs, who had been driven out of Shah Soojah's territory, and suffering, if not aiding, them to return again to foment new disturbances. Sultan Mahomed Khan and his brothers at Peshawur were servants of the Maharajah, but they were Barukzyes still; and it was not strange that they regarded with undisguised satisfaction the clouds which were gathering over the restored Suddozye monarchy.

But more important still than these considerations, was the question which had now arisen regarding the free passage of our troops and convoys through the dominions of Lahore. It was obvious that we could not maintain our position in Afghanistan so long as the Punjab stood impassable between that country and Hindostan. But Nao Nehal Singh and the Kalsa viewed with insurmountable jealousy the passage of our armaments through the Punjab. They declared, that when Mr. Clark negotiated for a passage for the troops returning from the expedition into Afghanistan, the accorded permission was limited to that especial case, and was by no means intended to convey a general license for the repeated crossings and recrossings which now seemed to be in contemplation. But Macnaghten declared that it was absolutely necessary to "macadamise" the road through the Punjab; and the authorities at Calcutta began to think that a war with the Sikhs was no improbable event.

Parallel with these inquietudes arising out of the conduct of the Lahore Durbar and its agents, ran the troubles which weighed upon Macnaghten's mind in connexion with the ill-omened aspect of affairs at Herat. The insolent ingratitude of Yar Mahomed had reached a pitch of sublime daring. The British Government were lavishing their treasures upon Herat; and the chief minister of Herat, in return for this support, was insulting the British

officers, and intriguing with the Persian Court. It has been stated that in the month of June, 1839, Major D'Arcy Todd had been despatched on a special mission to Herat. He was instructed to conclude a treaty of friendship with Shah Kamran; to ascertain the causes of the dissatisfaction of the Heratee Court with the British Government; to conciliate the good will of Yar Mahomed, and to wean him from his Persian intrigues, by assuring him of our friendly disposition towards him, and of our desire to support his administration; to determine, if possible, the boundaries between Shah Kamran's and Shah Soojah's dominions; to aid the Heratee Government with money, and to strengthen the fortifications of the place. This accomplished, he was to have joined the Court of Shah Soojah, leaving Pottinger, whose authority he was not to have superseded, to carry on the ordinary duties of the Agency. But the young Bombay Artilleryman had availed himself of the occasion of Todd's presence at Herat to obtain leave of absence, and visit the British provinces; and the latter had consented to remain in his place.

The task which had been entrusted to Major Todd he had performed, as far as such a task was one of possible performance, with no common address; and being a man of enlarged humanity, with a high sense of his duty as a Christian officer, he had exerted himself to render the presence of the British Mission at Herat a blessing to the oppressed and suffering people. But it was not possible to change the nature of Yar Mahomed; to make him either grateful or true. In the history of human infamy there is nothing more infamous than the conduct of this man. The treaty between the British Government and the state of Herat, by which the latter bound itself not to enter into negotiations with other states without the knowledge and consent of the British Resident, had only been signed a few weeks, when Yar Mahomed was detected in carrying

on a correspondence with the Persian Asoof-ood-Dowlah at Meshed, offering to place himself and his country under the protection of the Persian Government, and inviting him to enter into a league for the expulsion of the infidel English from Afghanistan.

Up to this time, eight lakhs of rupees had been advanced to the Heratee Government. When the new year dawned upon Herat, twelve lakhs had been so advanced. The utmost benefits had been conferred upon the state. The measures of our British officers had rescued "King, chiefs, and people from starvation."* But at this very time a letter was addressed to Mahomed Shah of Persia, in the name of Shah Kamran, declaring the Heratee ruler to be the faithful servant of the Shah-in-Shah; and setting forth that he only tolerated the presence of the English because they were useful to him—that, in truth, they were not niggardly with their money; but that the hopes of his Majesty were in the asylum of Islam.

In explanation of this black-hearted treachery it is said that the apprehensions of Yar Mahomed had been excited by the imposing attitude of Great Britain in Afghanistan—that he looked upon the danger to be apprehended from the contiguity of the British army as something less remote and more alarming than the return of Mahomed Shah; and that it was his policy at this time to play off one state against another, and to secure the good offices of Persia, whilst openly receiving the

* "The price of flour in the Herat bazaar was, about this time, one Company's rupee for less than four Hindostanee seers; and the whole supply from Toorkistan, the markets of which had been opened by our negotiations with Khiva. On our arrival at Herat, although the harvest had been reaped, five maunds of flour were with difficulty procured in the bazaar; and to meet the demand which the arrival of the Mission (consisting of about 120 persons) occasioned, we had immediately to send for supplies to Seistan."—[*Facts relating to Herat, by Dr. J. S. Login.*]

bounties of Great Britain. This is, doubtless, the view in which the matter is to be regarded with reference to the case of Yar Mahomed, the statesman. He was not incapable of taking a statesmanlike view of the position of his principality. He understood the interests of Herat. But better still did he understand the interests of Yar Mahomed. The presence of the English officers at Herat was a burden and a reproach to the Wuzeer. He hated their interference; he had no sympathy with their high-toned notions of humanity—with their horror of slavery—with their compassion for the weak and oppressed. He had thriven best in bad times; he had found the sufferings of the people serviceable to him. The *surveillance* of the British Mission impeded the exercise of his arbitrary desire to enrich himself at the expense of his poorer countrymen. So he hated Pottinger; he hated Todd; he hated every high-minded Englishman. But he bore with them for their money. Todd's measures were especially distasteful to him. The effort which he was making to break down the accursed slave-trade of Central Asia, was more obnoxious than everything beside.

Associated with Todd—an Artillery officer—were two other subalterns of Artillery—James Abbott and Richmond Shakespear. They were men of ability, of enthusiasm, and of high courage. Abbott's mind was of a more imaginative and romantic cast than that of his associate, who had qualities of a more serviceable kind, more practical, and more judicious. Both were men sure to carry out any duty, however hazardous, entrusted to them, in a conscientious and intrepid manner. They were well inclined for any kind of personal adventure; and, ardent in the pursuit of knowledge, were eager to explore new countries, to mix with an unfamiliar people, and to visit uncivilised courts. When, therefore, Todd, acquainted with the menacing attitude which Russia had assumed towards

the Court of Khiva, and the declared grounds of her Central-Asian expedition, recognised the expediency of despatching a British officer to the capital of the Khan Huzzrut, to mediate for the liberation of the Russian slaves in captivity there, he was fortunate in having at his elbow two men, to either of whom he might securely entrust the charge of a mission at once hazardous and delicate. In December, 1840, Abbott, who was the senior of the two, was hastily despatched to the Court of Khiva.* The Khivan ruler, then awaiting in alarm the approach of the Muscovite battalions, yet not altogether unsuspicious of the forward movements of the British, was well-inclined to receive the Mission; but Yar Mahomed had set at work the same dark intrigues

* "When Major Todd, in June, 1839, arrived as envoy at Herat, he selected Moollah Hussan, a Mahomedan priest of great respectability, as bearer of a letter of friendship to the Khan Huzzrut (Supreme Lord) of Khiva, called also Khaurism Shah, or King of Khaurism. Moollah Hussan, arrived at Khiva when the state was threatened with a Russian invasion, was well received; and on his return was accompanied by an Oosbeg Lord, Shookkurroola Bre by name, as ambassador from the Khan Huzzrut to the Indian Government. The letter borne by this ambassador accepted of the tender of British friendship, and made several demands which could not be complied with on the responsibility of Major Todd. It was in answer to this mission that the Envoy deputed me to visit the Court of Khiva." —[*Captain Abbott's Narrative of a Journey from Herat to Khiva: Preliminary Remarks.*] For an account of Captain Abbott's personal adventures, with a glimmering here and there of his political negotiations, I would refer the reader to his interesting volumes. Abbott says, at the commencement of his narrative: "We (Todd and Abbott) separate under circumstances sufficiently gloomy. I leave him in the very stronghold of robbers. I go myself as agent of the British Government to a Court, of the language and manners of which I am utterly ignorant, and to accomplish that of which the most sanguine have no hope. It is simply a matter of duty, and as such entered upon cheerfully, and with full determination to carry my efforts to the utmost."

which had caused Colonel Stoddart to be cast into captivity at Bokhara, and was doing his best to thwart the humane efforts of the British artilleryman. He seems to have had an instinctive hatred of men who were exerting themselves to sweep away the foul slave-marts of Central Asia.

With deep and painful interest Macnaghten watched the progress of events at Herat. The perfidy of Yar Mahomed was so glaring—so unblushing—that the Envoy had not hesitated to recommend offensive proceedings against the state of Herat, to be followed by its re-annexation to the dominions of Shah Soojah. But Lord Auckland when the proposal first came before him, was disinclined to embrace it. He thought it better to forgive Yar Mahomed; and make a further experiment upon the gratitude of the Wuzeer. So, instead of an army, as Macnaghten eagerly recommended, a further supply of money was sent to Herat; and Yar Mahomed continued to intrigue with the Persian Government.*

It seemed to the Envoy, at this time, that there was no middle course to be pursued. All through our Central-Asian policy, indeed, there ran two substantive ideas. It was either the bayonet or the money-bag that was to settle everything for us. When Macnaghten found that

* Ghorian, the frontier post of Herat, had been taken by the Persians in 1838. When, in the spring of 1840, the perfidy of Yar Mahomed was discovered, the Wuzeer expressed some contrition, and an anxiety to prove his sincerity, by fitting out an expedition for the recovery of Herat. All that he wanted was money. If the British agent would advance him two lakhs of rupees, he would speedily recover Ghorian. The money was advanced; and of course Ghorian was not recovered. It was believed by the Mission that, whilst pretending to make his preparations for the expedition, the Wuzeer was sending messages to the Persian commandant at Ghorian, telling him not to be under any apprehensions, for that although the British desired him to recover the place, he had no intention of making the attempt.

the rulers of Herat were not to be dragooned into propriety, he declared that there was nothing left for us now but to bribe them. He proposed that a subsidy of two or three lakhs per annum should be granted to Herat; that guns, muskets, and ordnance stores in abundance should be furnished to the state; and in the meanwhile he continued to send up more treasure, with a profusion which startled the Calcutta Government, to be expended on the strengthening of its defences and the sustentation of the people.

But as the treachery of Yar Mahomed became more fully developed, the Governor-General began to mistrust the efficacy of the course of forbearance and conciliation which he had in the first instance recommended. He had authorised Major Todd to declare his forgiveness of all past offences, and was willing to enter upon a new covenant of friendship, *rasâ tabulâ*, with the offending state. But he was not then acquainted with the fact of the letter to Mahomed Shah, in which, with almost unexampled shamelessness, the writer boasted of the cajolery practised upon the English, who lavished their money freely upon Herat, whilst its rulers were flinging themselves into the arms of Persia; for although that letter had been written in January, and came, therefore, within the margin of those offences for which forgiveness had been declared, it was not until some time afterwards that this crowning act of perfidy was discovered and laid bare before the Governor-General. Then it would seem that Lord Auckland began to waver in his resolution to maintain the independence of Herat. But he was at this time resident at Calcutta. Sir Jasper Nicolls,* who had held the chief command at

* In Council, the Commander-in-Chief was consistently opposed to the project of an advance on Herat or the countries beyond the Hindoo-Koosh. On the 25th of May he wrote in his journal: "In a quiet way, without any formality, I placed in the Governor-General's hands

Madras, an old and distinguished officer, who had done good service in the Nepaul war, and was possessed of an amount of Indian experience almost unexampled in an Indian Commander-in-Chief, was at the Presidency. The war in Afghanistan had been extremely distasteful to him from the beginning, and he now viewed with suspicion and alarm all the projects which were passing before him for the despatch of more troops and the diversion of more treasure from their legitimate purposes in Hindostan. No warlike promptings, therefore, from the military side of the Council Chamber, ever stimulated Lord Auckland to bury his legions in the inhospitable defiles of Afghanistan, or to waste the finances of India in insane attempts to change the nature of the chiefs and people of Central Asia, and to bribe them into quiescence and peace.

But ever was it the burden of Macnaghten's letters, that he could do nothing with Afghanistan until Yar Mahomed and the Sikhs had been chastised; and Herat on the one side, and Peshawur on the other, re-annexed to the Douranee Empire. How strongly he felt on these points may be gathered both from the public and private letters which, in the summer of 1840, he despatched from Caubul to his correspondents in different parts of India

to-day in Council a paper detailing the numbers of regiments and troops or companies of artillery now beyond our frontier. It is very great: 1 troop and 5 companies of Artillery; 1 regiment of Native Cavalry; 9 regiments of European and 15½ of Native Infantry; 2½ companies of Golundauze, and 2 companies of Sappers. I remarked at the foot that this aggregate exceeded, except in horse artillery and cavalry, the two armies which, in 1803, beat down the great army of Scindiah, under Lake and Wellesley. I did this in the hope of inducing Lord Auckland to pause before he sanctioned any advance upon Balkh or to Herat, for we can ill afford any such extension of our force. In truth, we are much weaker now than in 1838, when the first augmentation was ordered in view to our later campaign."—[*MS. Journal of Sir Jasper Nicolls.*]

and Afghanistan. "This," he wrote to the Governor-General on the 20th of July, "if the means are available, appears to me the time for accomplishing the great work which your Lordship has commenced, and of effectually frustrating the designs of Russia. Herat should now be taken possession of in the name of Shah Soojah. To leave it in the hands of its present possessors, after the fresh proofs of treachery and enmity towards us which they have displayed, would, in my humble opinion, be most dangerous. Herat may be said to be the pivot of all operations affecting the safety of our possessions and our interests in the East, and thence Balkh and Bokhara would be at all times accessible. The Sikhs should no longer be suffered to throw unreasonable obstacles in the way of our just and necessary objects, and if they really feel (as they are bound by treaty to do) an interest in the success of our operations, they should not object to the passage of our troops, or even to their location in the Punjab, should such a measure be deemed conducive to the welfare of us both. Your Lordship will, I feel assured, forgive the freedom of these remarks. I am convinced that one grand effort will place the safety of our interests on a firm and solid basis. . . . . I shall only add, that should offensive operations against Herat be undertaken, I should not entertain the smallest doubt of their complete and speedy success, especially as we should have many friends in the country."* "We have a beautiful game on our hands," he wrote in another letter, "if we have the means and inclination to play it properly. Our advance upon Herat would go far to induce the Russian government to attend to any reasonable overtures on the part of the Khan of Khiva."

And so still was Macnaghten's cry ever for more money

* *MS. Correspondence.* See also letters to Mr. Robertson, Major Todd, and Sir J. R. Carnac;—quoted in first edition.

and more bayonets, that he might play the "beautiful game" of knocking down and setting up kingdoms and principalities, with which it became us not to interfere, to the waste of the resources, and the sacrifice of the interests of those whom Providence had especially committed to our care.

In the meanwhile, in the dominions of Shah Soojah everything was going wrong. Macnaghten still professed his belief in the popularity of the King, and was unwilling to acknowledge that the people were not in a state of repose. But every now and then, both in Afghanistan itself, and in the country that had been wrested from Mehrab Khan, awkward evidences of the unsettled state of the country rose up to proclaim far and wide the fact, that there was little loyalty in men's minds towards the Shah, and little affection for his foreign supporters. The Ghilzyes, whom in the preceding autumn Captain Outram had attacked, and, it was said, reduced, were now again rebelling in Western Afghanistan. The chiefs had fled to Peshawur, had been harboured there during the winter, and now, on the return of the spring, had been slipped from their retreat, strengthened, it was believed, by Sikh gold. At all events, in the month of April they were actively employed raising the tribes and cutting off our communications between Candahar and Caubul. General Nott had by this time assumed the command of the troops at the former place—a place with which his name has since become imperishably associated. Under-rating the strength of the "rebels," as all were then called who did not appreciate the new order of things which the British had established in Afghanistan, he sent out a party of 200 horsemen, under Captains Walker and Tayler, to clear the road. But the detachment was not strong enough for the purpose. It was necessary to reinforce them. Nott had some good officers about him, but he

had not one better than Captain William Anderson, of the Bengal Artillery, commandant of the Shah's Horse Artillery at Candahar. So, on the 6th of May, the General sent for Anderson, and asked him whether he could prepare himself to march on the following morning, with a regiment of foot, four guns, and 300 horsemen. Anderson answered promptly that the artillery were always ready, and that he would do his best. By seven o'clock on the following morning the detachment was under arms and ready for the march. On the 14th they came up with Tayler and Walker, in the neighbourhood of the Turnuk river. The Ghilzyes were about eight miles distant, variously reported at from 600 to 3000 men. Anderson's cattle were exhausted; so he halted, and to gain time, opened negotiations with the enemy. The answer sent back by the chiefs was a gallant one. They said, that they had 12,000 men—a firm faith in God and in the justice of their cause—and that they would fight. So Anderson prepared to attack them. Detaching his cavalry to the right and left, he moved down, on the 16th, with his infantry and his guns, and, after a march of some five miles, found the enemy about 2000 strong, occupying some hills in his front. The action was a gallant one on both sides. Twice the enemy charged. The first charge was repulsed by a heavy fire from Turner's guns—the second was met at the point of the bayonet by Spence's infantry. Anderson, after the first march from Candahar, beguiled by some accounts of the retirement of the enemy, had sent back the greater part of the cavalry with which he had started; so that he was weak in that arm. But for this, he would have cut up the enemy with heavy slaughter. As it was, the victory was complete. The enemy fled and betook themselves to their mountain fastnesses, whilst Anderson re-formed column and marched on to take up a good position above Olan Robat. The

country around was quieted for a time by this victory; but disaffection was not rooted out. Indeed, every action of this kind only increased the bitter animosity of the Ghilzyes, and established unappeasable blood-feuds between our people and the tribes.

But the money-bag was now brought in to complete what the bayonet had commenced. It was expedient to conciliate the Ghilzyes, who had at any time the power of cutting off our communications between Candahar and Caubul; and Macnaghten, therefore, recommended the payment of an annual stipend to the chiefs,* on condition that they would restrain their followers from infesting the highways. But neither the bayonet nor the money-bag could keep these turbulent tribes in a continued state of repose.†

At the same time, the state of the southern provinces

* 30,000 rupees (or 3000*l.*) per annum.

† In connection with the Ghilzye affairs at this time, comes in the unpleasant story of the surrender of Wulloo Khan. I believe that the following account of the transaction, which appeared in a Calcutta journal, is substantially correct: "Wulloo Khan, after his beating, wished to make terms. Anderson allowed him to go into Candahar to do so. He was successful, and received a dress of honour from Major Leech, and one from the Shah-zadah ruling Candahar. He declared he had been instigated to resistance by men in Candahar, and that he would show their letters. He returned to Anderson, and then to his home; when hearing that Lieutenant Nicolson and Shah-zadah Timour were near, relying on the pledged words of our political agent, Major Leech, and the Shah-zadah Futteh Jung, Wulloo Khan went to make his obedience, and was immediately seized and made prisoner. His letters and dress of honour, together with a strong protest against such proceedings from Anderson, may have saved his head, but he is sent prisoner to Caubul." The writer adds, that "three of the prisoners made over to Lieutenant Nicolson and the Shah-zadah Timour had their heads struck off;" but I have before me a specific declaration, made by the Envoy in a letter to Lord Auckland, dated November 24, 1840, that "*not a single political execution has taken place since* his Majesty's accession to power."

was such as to excite painful disquietude in Macnaghten's mind. The tract of country which, after the capture of Khelat, had been annexed, by the fiat of the Indian Government, to the territory of Shah Soojah, was perpetually breaking out into fierce spasms of unrest. It had been almost entirely denuded of British troops, and small detachments were sent here and there, or solitary political agents sate themselves down, with only a handful of fighting men at command, as though all their paths were pleasantness and peace, and all their homes bowers of repose. But the Beloochees neither liked their new chief nor his European supporters. The blood of Mehrab Khan was continually crying out against the usurpation. Ever and anon opportunity offered, and it was not neglected. One officer,* on his way from the fort of Kahun with a convoy of camels, was overwhelmed and destroyed by the Beloochees. Kahun was invested by the Murrees. Quettah was besieged by the Khaukurs.† It was soon apparent that the whole country was in revolt. The youthful son of Mehrab Khan was in the field. The tribes were flocking around him. The chief who had been set up in his place was at Khelat. Lieutenant Loveday was with him. The defences of the place were miserably out of repair. The garrison mainly consisted of the chief's own people. There were scarcely any means of resistance at their command, when the wild tribes, headed by the family of Nussur Khan, came crowding around the walls of Khelat. The new chief was staunch

* Lieutenant Walpole Clerk—a young officer of conspicuous gallantry and zeal.

† The defence of the former place by Captain Lewis Brown, and of the latter by Captain Bean, are among the most noticeable incidents of the war, and deserve more extended notice than I can give them in this place. I am compelled to leave it to others to chronicle more minutely the progress of events in Upper Sindh.

and true. But there were traitors and evil counsellors in the fort, and Loveday listened to bad advice. No succours could be sent to his relief, for our other positions in Upper Sindh were threatened by the hostile tribes. And so it happened that, after some days of beleaguerment, Khelat fell to the Brahoo chiefs.* Newaz Khan abdicated in favour of the youthful son of the prince who had fallen in the defence of his stronghold; Loveday was made a prisoner; and when some months afterwards, a detachment of British troops advanced to the relief of Dadur, which had been attacked by the enemy, the unfortunate young officer was found in the deserted camp of the Brahoos, chained to a camel-pannier, half naked,

* Commenting on the neglect of all ordinary precautions, by which the insurrection had been suffered to make so much head in Upper Sindh, Burnes, on the 7th of August, wrote to Macnaghten:—"In April, 1839, when called upon by you to state officially what should be done to chastise the treachery of the chief of Khelat, I recommended, in common with yourself and Lord Keane, his deposition; but I as plainly stated in my letter of the 10th of that month, 'that while our troops continued at Shawl, this may be an unnecessary arrangement (to raise national troops), but both at Moostung and Cutchee very energetic measures will be required to these countries; and happily their resources are such, that this will amply repay the labour and expense.' Was this vigour displayed by his Majesty's Government on the spot, or by our own authorities? One of his Majesty's governors has joined the insurgents, and the political agent was taken by surprise on an occasion which the slightest foresight might have anticipated. What right have we to expect that any chief placed in power shall flourish by us, unless his government is better than that which we have overthrown? Did Shah Newaz muster or even organise his troops? Did he point out the necessity for payment, or the means of making them superior to his adversaries? We advanced him a lakh of rupees, and allowed him to continue most at Caubul, while we withdrew all our troops. Khelat is the capital of Beloochistan—a poor but vast country, stretching from the mountains in sight of the Indus to the confines of Persia. Through this wide tract our discomfiture affects our reputation; the only solace in it will be found in our chief, not our troops being vanquished."—[*Papers privately printed.*]

emaciated, and dead. His throat had just been cut by the sabre of a Beloochee horseman.*

But in spite of all these indications of unrest—these signs of the desperate unpopularity of the restored monarchy—Macnaghten clung to the belief that the country was settling down under the rule of Shah Soojah, and never ceased to represent to Lord Auckland and his secretaries that there were no grounds for uneasiness or alarm. He was, indeed, most anxious to remove any impressions of an opposite character which may have forced themselves upon the minds of the Governor-General and his advisers. On the 8th of July he wrote to Mr. Colvin, saying; "You tell me that my letter has left a very painful impression upon you, as manifesting my sense of the weakness of the royal cause. I fear I must have written my mind to very little purpose regarding the state of this country. You rightly conjecture that the Barukzyes have most 'inflammable material to work upon.' Of all moral qualities, avarice, credulity, and bigotry, are the most inflammable, and the Afghans have all these three in perfection. They will take Sikh gold, they will believe that Shah Soojah is nobody, and they will esteem it a merit to fight against us. When, in addition to these inducements, there has been positively no government in the country for the last thirty years, it will cease to be wondered at that commotion can easily be raised by intriguers possessing a long contiguity of frontier, and having, besides, all the means and appliances to ensure success. Though our presence here, doubtless, strengthens Shah Soojah, it must be remembered that in some sense it weakens him. There is no denying that he has been supported by infidels; and were we not here, he would adopt Afghan means of suppressing disturbances

* This, however, was not until the beginning of November. Loveday had then been for some months in captivity.

such as we could not be a party to. To break faith with a rebel is not deemed a sin by the most moral Afghan; and assassination was an every day occurrence. By the encouragement of blood-feuds, it is notorious that Dost Mahomed propped up the little power he had beyond the gates of Caubul."*

It vexed Macnaghten's spirit to think that he could not infuse into other British officers in Afghanistan some of his own overflowing faith in the popularity of the Shah, or his own respect for the royal person. From the very outset of the campaign the popular feeling throughout the army had been strong against Shah Soojah, and the conduct of his Majesty himself had not tended to lessen it.† And the worst of it was, that all kinds of stories

* *Unpublished Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*

† About this time Macnaghten had been much vexed by the conduct of General Nott, who, from first to last, treated the royal family of Caubul with the supremest contempt. Nothing could induce him to behave towards any one of them with ordinary respect. At last Macnaghten was compelled to lay his complaints before the Supreme Government. "It was with much regret," he wrote to Lord Auckland, "that I felt compelled to refer to government a difference of opinio between myself and Sir Willoughby, but if such an outrage as that committed by General Nott is to be tolerated and justified, there must be an end of our efforts to make it be believed that Shah Soojah is king of this country. I know how embarrassing these references are, and I should have been happy to have saved government the trouble of passing orders on the question, had Sir Willoughby so far supported me as to have conveyed a censure to General Nott for the deliberate and gratuitous violence which he had committed. The *animus* by which he has been actuated is apparent throughout—he refused to pay the Prince the common compliment of calling upon him, although told that such a civility was expected. There is, I regret to say, a feeling too prevalent amongst the officers of the force against his Majesty, who is considered the sole cause of their detention here—and I hope that though they may not be compelled to treat the royal family with becoming respect, yet that they will not be permitted to offer them a direct insult with impunity."

about the haughty exclusiveness of the Shah, and the low estimation in which he was held both by the British officers and by his own subjects, were perpetually making their way to Government House, and there finding ready acceptance. It irritated Macnaghten to receive letters from Colvin, commenting on failure, and hinting at mismanagement in Afghanistan. At last his patience gave way, and on the 4th of August he wrote to the Private Secretary, bitterly complaining of the attention paid by Government to the stories of persons afflicted with the "imposthume of too much leisure," who, he said, were daily fabricating the grossest falsehoods against his Majesty and the authorities, as the supposed cause of their detention in a land "not overflowing with beer and cheroots." "The Shah," he added, "is conciliatory in the extreme to all his chiefs. He listens with the greatest patience to all their requests and representations, however unreasonable, and he cannot bear to give any of them a direct refusal on any occasion. You have been told that he is a ruler who seeks to get on 'without trusting, rewarding, or punishing' any of his own people. It is nonsense upon the face of it, and is contradicted by every hour's experience. I have nothing more to say about his Majesty's character than I have already said. I believe him to be the best and ablest man in his kingdom. The history of the revenues of this poor country may be given in a few words. The whole is consumed in the pay of the priesthood, the soldiery, and the support of his Majesty's household. You shall have the particulars of these as soon as I can get half an hour's leisure. You know we are solemnly bound to refrain from interference in the internal administration; and, in my advice, I have been cautious to urge no innovations which could, at this early stage of our connection with them, shock the prejudices of the people."

"And now, my dear Colvin," continued the vexed envoy, "you must allow me to disburden my mind to you. I have perceived, or fancied I perceived, on several occasions lately, a want of confidence in my proceedings, and a disposition to listen to every unfavourable report regarding affairs in this quarter; whilst I do not receive that support to which the overwhelming difficulties of my position entitle me." He then adverted to a controversy which, he said, had been "thrust upon him" by Brigadier Roberts, who commanded the Shah's force. There had been from the first a jealousy, almost amounting to a conflict of authority, between the envoy and the brigadier. It was often difficult to observe the just frontier-line between the military and the political, and each had chafed under the supposed interference of the other. The soldier, whose imagination did not colour affairs in Afghanistan with the roseate hues which flushed everywhere the future of the civilian, was regarded as an intrusive alarmist; whilst to Roberts it appeared, on the other hand, that the sanguine temperament of the envoy, was likely to be the parent of a host of evils which might culminate in some frightful disaster. The controversy had been brought to the notice of the Governor-General, rather in the shape of private or demi-official correspondence than in a formal appeal to the higher authority; and Lord Auckland, who still looked forward to the entire withdrawal of the regular troops from Afghanistan, and was, therefore, anxious to support the functionary on whom would then devolve the chief military command, ordered an official letter to be written containing some passages which stung the envoy to the quick.* Believing, then, that the Governor-General had

* "His Lordship in Council has a strong desire, in which he looks for your concurrence, to uphold the military position of Brigadier Roberts. Whenever the regular troops shall be withdrawn from Afghanistan, he will be your first military authority; and every British

withdrawn his confidence from him, he talked of resigning his appointment. "If no important operations," he wrote to the Private Secretary, "should be contemplated for next year in this quarter, for the conduct of which it may be thought desirable that I should remain, some of the public money will be saved by the appointment of a less-paid though equally qualified agent. I never yet have served in an office where I had not the confidence of my superiors, and my inclination to do so is by no means strengthened after a laborious public life of thirty-one years."

He was sore in spirit at this time because, as he said, his actions were watched and his measures criticised, and letters written to Calcutta, setting forth that things were not going on well in Afghanistan. He complained that the Governor-General was too willing to listen to all the stories which reached him from uncertain sources of information, and he looked upon Lord Auckland's reasonable credulity as unreasonable want of confidence in him. "I am much obliged to you," he wrote to a friend in August, "for the kind hint contained in your last. I should never for a moment think of resigning my post from any difference of opinion between myself and my superiors, as to the measures which should be adopted for the security of our interests in this quarter; but when a want of confidence is shown in myself personally, I would rather not wait till I get a less equivocal hint to move. Of late, I find that there has been kept up a system of espionage on my proceedings, and that the most ready credence has been afforded to the malevolent tales of every idle fellow

officer employed in that country, should be led to look to him. His Lordship can only express his approbation of the care which is exhibited by the Brigadier for the force committed to his charge, and he will be glad when circumstances will permit him to carry into effect his views for its discipline and comfort."

about camp, to say nothing of newspaper fabrications, which are taken for gospel. I cannot well help myself as to my correspondents, for Colvin evidently writes to me with the sanction of the Governor-General."

But above all these petty cares and distractions rose the one dominant thought in Macnaghten's mind, of the great and beautiful game that was to be played by the annexation of Herat and the coercion of the Sikhs; and still he continued to write to Lord Auckland that there was nothing else to be done. One letter of many will suffice to show how this leading idea still overbore everything in his mind:—

"We are now arrived at a crisis which calls for the most serious consideration. If such a course should suit the convenience of government, I should say that a vigorous policy now is that which ought to be pursued. It is, indeed, in my opinion, by such a course alone that our interests can be secured, and your Lordship's past policy justified. By annexing Herat to the crown of Caubul, and by insisting upon the concession of our rights from the ruler of the Punjab, your Lordship will at once provide for the consolidation of Shah Soojah's power, and show to the world that the attainment of all the advantages contemplated from the movement across the Indus, has been hitherto opposed only by the perfidious intrigues of the two powers professing to be our friends and allies. In addition to the demands already made upon the Sikhs, they should be required, I think, to admit unequivocally our right of way across the Punjab, and in the event of their denying this right, they should be convinced that we can take it. I confess myself utterly ignorant of what political objections may exist to this course of proceeding, or of the military means that may be available; and I am much staggered at a paper which I have just seen from Captain Sanders, who talks of its being expedient to take 12,000 men against Herat. I believe, however, that military authorities seldom underrate the difficulties to be encountered. This paper will, I believe, be sent to your Lordship by Sir W. Cotton. I have a proposition from Captain Bean to recognise the right of Meerab Khan's son to the musnud of Khelat. This I think might be done, if he would come and pay homage in person to Shah Soojah, as Shah Nurwaz can never be re-instated. But I shall tell Captain Bean to keep the questi

open if possible, until I know your Lordship's views regarding Herat. If it be intended to send a large force into the country with a view of reducing Herat, the Khelat affair will afford an excellent screen to our intentions. I must beg your Lordship most earnestly, if possible, to relieve the two European and five Native regiments now in this neighbourhood. They are inefficient and worn out, and both officers and men are grumbling and discontented. In the present state of affairs it would be very hazardous to admit of their return, unless their places were filled by fresh troops, and a relief would enable us to settle with promptitude the Bajor affairs, and to place our relations with the Khyburees on a firmer basis. Then, should Dost Mahomed come in, he will have to be be sent to India, and in the present state of Sikh feeling, I doubt if it would be prudent to send him across the Punjab with only a regiment for his escort. We have a rumour very generally credited, that Colonel Stoddart has been poisoned by the Ameer of Bokhara, but I yet hope that it will prove incorrect. On the Ghilzye affairs alluded to in your Lordship's letter of the 16th, I have this day written to Mr. Colvin. In a day or two it is my intention to send up officially, with my comments, a paper handed to me by Sir A. Burnes, on the present state and future prospects of this country. I hope to show that, all things considered, we are in as prosperous a condition as could have been expected. Sir A. of course wishes to prove the contrary, since by doing so, when he succeeds me, his failures would thus find excuse and his success additional credit. This is all natural enough. I have been exposed to a thousand interruptions whilst writing this, and beg pardon if I have used too much freedom."*

In a letter despatched a few days afterwards to Lord Auckland, Macnaghten wrote: "I trust the Russians may not come to Khiva this year, for we have quite enough on our hands without them. Captain Conolly starts in a few days. I trust your Lordship will have the goodness to direct that both he and Captain Abbott be gazetted as lieutenant-colonels whilst serving in Toorkistan." There had gone forth a mission—and an ill-omened one, to Bokhara—there had gone forth two missions to Khiva—

* *MS. Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten. Caubul: Aug.* 12, 1840.

and now one was to be despatched to the intervening state of Kokund.

Eagerly did Arthur Conolly grasp the idea of this Kokund mission. He was a man of an earnest, impulsive nature, running over with the purest feelings of benevolence, and glowing with the most intense longings after the civilisation and evangelisation of the human race. He believed that the great Central-Asian movement was designed by Providence to break down the huge walls of Mahomedanism which begirt the shining East, and to substitute civilisation, liberty, and peace, for barbarism, slavery, and strife. He was a visionary, but one of the noblest order; and when he looked out beyond the great barrier of the Hindoo-Koosh, traversed in imagination the deserts of Merve, and visited the barbarous Courts of the Khans of Khiva, Kokund, and Bokhara, he never doubted for a moment that the mission which he was about to undertake was one of the highest and holiest with which a Christian officer could be entrusted. "I feel very confident," he wrote to a friend, "about all our policy in Central Asia; for I think that the designs of our government there are honest, and that they will work with a blessing from God, who seems now to be breaking up all the barriers of the long-closed East, for the introduction of Christian knowledge and peace. It is deeply interesting to watch the effects that are being produced by the exertions of the European powers, some selfish and contrary; others still selfish, but qualified with peace and generosity; all made instrumental to good. See the French in Africa; the English, Austrians, and Russians on the Bosphorus, forcing the Turks to be European under a shadow of Mahomedanism, and providing for the peaceful settlement of the fairest and most sacred countries in the world." *

Ever delighting in adventure, and prone to romance,

* *MS. Correspondence of Arthur Conolly. Caubul: May* 16, 1840.

he was at this time in a frame of mind which rendered him peculiarly greedy of excitement. A great sorrow was weighing heavily upon his heart. He sought relief in stirring occupation—in active adventure upon new scenes of enterprise; and when, for a time, it seemed that the unwillingness of the Supreme Government to sanction the mission was not to be overcome, he gave vent to the liveliest feelings of disappointment: "I was greatly disappointed," he wrote to a dear friend on the 30th of May, "when Lord Auckland's prohibitory letter arrived; for I had set my heart upon this nobly stirring employment; and when the chance of it seemed removed, I felt the blank that a man must feel who has a heavy grief as the first thing to fall back upon."

Conolly and Rawlinson were to have proceeded together to the camp of General Peroffski. But the Muscovite expedition to Khiva was brought by cold and want to a mournful end at Ak-boulak, and there was soon no Russian camp in Central Asia to which these enterprising officers could be despatched, if the permission of Government had been obtained. But Conolly, believing in his inmost heart that there was a much grander game to be played in those remote regions than one suggested by the mere accidental circumstance of the Russian advance, still clung to his conviction of the policy of the contemplated Mission, and earnestly enforced his opinions upon his political chief. Macnaghten listened—yielded—and indulging rather the wishes of his friend than conforming to the dictates of his own judgment, recommended the enterprise to the favourable consideration of the Supreme Government; and acting upon certain passages in a letter from the Chief Secretary, which might be construed into an implied permission, of a general rather than a specific character, ordered Conolly to proceed to Khiva and Kokund.

It was with feelings of irrepressible delight, that now, at the beginning of August, Arthur Conolly found himself "fairly going" on his enterprising journey to the Courts of the Trans-Oxian Khans. His heart was in the cause. He was full of impetuous enthusiasm. He was eager that the British Government should play "the grand game" in Central Asia, and declared that a mission so righteous in its objects must prosper in his hands. His spirits rose, as he looked into the future; and, full of generous enthusiasm, he began to make preparations for his journey. "We are just on the wing," he wrote to Rawlinson on the 22nd of August, "and I shall make the best of my way to the two capitals for which I carry credentials. It is a work which must prosper; and I only wish again that you were to be of the party to accomplish it; but, as I said before, you occupy a high and useful station, and can't be at two places at once. If the British Government would only play the grand game;—help Russia cordially to all that she has a right to expect—shake hands with Persia—get her all possible amends from the Oosbegs, and secure her such a frontier as would both keep these man-stealers and savages in wholesome check, and take away her pretext for pushing herself and letting herself be pushed on to the Oxus—force the Bokhara Ameer to be just to us, the Afghans, and the other Oosbegs states, and his own kingdom—but why go on; you know my, at any rate in *one* sense, *enlarged* views. *Inshallah!* The expediency—nay, the necessity of them will be seen, and we shall play the noble part that the first Christian nation of the world ought to fill."

There were still, however, causes of delay. An ambassador from Shah Soojah was to accompany the British officer. But it was long before the King could select from the people about his Court one to whom he could entrust so responsible a duty. At last, after much hesi-

tation, his choice fell upon Allahdad Khan Populzye—a little, scrubby-looking, sallow-faced man, with a busy look and a restless eye, believed to be skilful in political intrigue, and as little likely to betray his trust as any man about the Court. He left his family and his money behind him, and these, as the Shah significantly said, were the best guarantees for his good conduct.

Everything now was ready. Conolly, early in September, turned his face towards the Hindoo-Koosh. There was a mission of another kind then setting towards those dreary regions. It was not a Mission of Peace. Colonel Dennie, who had distinguished himself at the head of the Ghuznee stormers, was about to march, with the 35th Sepoy Regiment, to reinforce the Bameean detachment, and to take the command of all the the troops on the northern frontier.

CHAPTER III.

[June—November : 1840.]

The last Struggles of Dost Mahomed—The British in the Hindoo-Koosh—The Ameer's Family—Occupation of Bajgah—Disaster of Kamurd—Escape of Dost Mahomed—Feverish State of Caubul—Dennie's Brigade—Defeat of the Ameer—Sale in the Kohistan—The Battle of Purwandurrah—Surrender of Dost Mahomed.

It is time that to these regions of the Hindoo-Koosh attention should now again be directed. The little force which had been despatched thither in the autumn of 1839, and had wintered among the caves of Bameean, was by the coming in of spring released from its inactivity. It was not Lord's policy to be quiet. There was Jubbar Khan with the family of Dost Mahomed at Khooloom. Already it has been seen that the reception of these people had been the subject of correspondence between Lord and Macnaghten. But Jubbar Khan halted between two opinions. The winter passed away. The spring passed away. And still he remained with his brother's family at Khooloom. The Wullee, or chief, of that place was still true to the cause of the Ameer; and he permitted the Newab to maintain this numerous party by levying the transit duties of the place.

This was a state of things which, in the opinion of Lord and Macnaghten, had already lasted long enough. They were eager to bring the Newab to a decision. So, at the end of May, or the beginning of June, a party was sent out under Captain Garbett, ostensibly for the purpose of

reconnoitring the passes to the north of our position at Bameean. But there was, doubtless, another object in view. It was believed that such a demonstration would have the effect of quickening the movements of Jubbar Khan, who had more than once been on the point of starting for the British post, but, overcome by irresolution, had struck his tents and returned. Already had some of the party of refugees left their asylum at Khooloom, and sought the hospitality of the British. Azim Khan, one of the Ameer's sons, had "come in;" and some of the women and children, too, had passed on towards Caubul. But the Newab himself still vacillated; and it was believed that a forward movement of our troops would stimulate him to come to a decision.

The movement had the desired effect. At all events, Jubbar Khan set out for Bameean. Nor was this the only noticeable result of the *reconnaissance*. Beyond the valley or glen of Kamurd, which stretches northward from Syghan across the great mountain-range, lay the isolated fortress of Bajgah. When our reconnoitring party came upon this place, to their surprise they found it deserted. It belonged to one Syud Mahomed, who now appeared, and declared that he had vacated it for the express purpose of making a tender of the fort to the British, as an outpost that might be of great service to them. A small party of infantry were accordingly placed in the fort, and the circumstance was immediately reported to Dr. Lord. Lord grasped at the offer; and in the strongest terms recommended both to Cotton and Macnaghten the permanent occupation of the post. His arguments prevailed; and on the 29th of June the Shah's 4th Regiment, under Captain Hay, was sent to garrison this isolated fort. On the 3rd of July, Jubbar Khan arrived at Bameean with the remaining members of the Ameer's family, and a large party of retainers.

It soon became obvious that the occupation of Bajgah was a mistake. Sturt, the engineer, who had been sent up to survey the passes, pronounced upon its unfitness as a military post. It was plain, too, that the temper of the surrounding tribes was very different from that of the population about Bameean. At the latter place the soldiery and the peasantry were on the best possible terms. About Bajgah the people looked upon the new comers with a jealous eye. All the efforts of Captain Hay to establish a friendly intercourse between himself and the inhabitants failed. They would not bring in grain; they would not bring in forage. Soon their hostility began to evince itself in a more alarming manner. "On the extreme summits of the northern hills overlooking Bajgah, were frequently seen groups of horsemen, apparently watching the movements of the people in the deep glen below."*

Unfortunately, at this time Hay, the only officer at Bajgah, was incapacitated by sickness. So he sent to Syghan for Lieutenant Golding; and on the 2nd of August sent out a party of two companies, under Sergeant Douglas, to escort that officer to Bajgah. They performed their march without interruption, and at night bivouacked under the walls of a fort held by one Sula Beg. The chief received them with an outside show of friendliness; and then despatched a message to another chief, Baba Beg, of Ajur, saying, "See! I have the Feringhees in a *dieg* (caldron). They are ready to your hand. If you are not here by noontide to-morrow, I will yield up my fort to them."

Morning came. There was no appearance of the party whom they had been sent to meet; so Douglas was pre-

* See "The British on the Hindoo-Koosh," an admirable series of papers published in more than one Indian periodical, and in *Stocqueler's Memorials of Afghanistan*. In referring to these papers, I acknowledge, with pride, my obligations to a brother's pen.

paring to return to Bajgah, when a heavy matchlock fire was opened on his men, from the fort and the surrounding orchards; and presently a party of Oosbeg horsemen appeared in sight, and charged down upon the little band, who met and repulsed the attack. It was a fine thing then to see the bold front which Douglas and his men showed to the enemy, as they made their way, exposed to a heavy matchlock fire, through the dense orchards and wilderness of gardens. But many fell on the retreat; and many more would have fallen, for their ammunition was well-nigh gone, had not Sturt suddenly appeared with two more companies of the same sturdy Goorkha Regiment,* and rescued them from inevitable destruction. The enemy turned and fled; and Sturt and Douglas returned to Bajgah.

The evil tidings of this disaster soon reached Caubul. It was a time of deep anxiety. As this month of August advanced, the perplexities which distracted the mind of the envoy, gathered around him more closely and more tormentingly. A series of small but mortifying failures, of which this Bajgah affair was one, not without a significance of their own, kept him in a constant state of excitability, and left him neither rest of body nor serenity of mind. On the 12th of August he wrote to Major Rawlinson, saying, "There has been an awkward business near Bajgah, owing to the incapacity of the officer in command of the 4th or Ghoorka Regiment. He has allowed a company to lose thirty or forty men, killed and wounded, I think but little of this affair. Lord has gone off to put things to rights. Macgregor has failed also in his efforts to set matters to rights in Bajore. His invincibles have been vanquished, and he has lost a gun. All these little accidents happening at once are

* He arrived at Bajgah on his way from Kooloom, and volunteered his services to Hay.

enough to disgust one; but, *Inshallah!* the Company's Nusseeb will prove superior to them all."

A week later, and it had become still more apparent that, even in the very neighbourhood of the capital, sedition was weaving plots for the subversion of the authority of the Shah; and that the Sikhs were intriguing from a distance for the restoration of Dost Mahomed. On the 19th of August, the envoy wrote to the same correspondent, that he had "intercepted a letter which, if genuine (as he had every reason to believe it to be), implicated many chiefs in meditated insurrection in favour of Dost Mahomed." It distinctly stated too, that Nao Nahal Singh had promised pecuniary aid in furtherance of the design. "I am now just going to his Majesty," he added, "to consult as to what should be done." It was time, indeed, that the King and the envoy should take counsel together. Dost Mahomed had escaped from Bokhara.

For a while the fugitive Ameer had tasted the bitterness of close confinement in the city of Bokhara. His sons, Afzul Khan and Akbar Khan, shared his captivity We know how the Khan of this inhospitable place is wont to treat his Christian guests. His Mahomedan visitors, whom he at first received with an outside show of kindness, were dealt with somewhat more leniently. But the natural ferocity of the man was not to be kept down. Dost Mahomed nearly became the victim of a treacherous murder. Baffled in this attempt on the life of his prisoners, and not daring openly to slay them, the Bokhara Ameer kept them for a time under strict *surveillance*, forbidding them even to repair to worship in the mosques. This inhospitable treatment seems to have called forth a remonstrance from the Shah of Persia, in consequence of which greater liberty was allowed to the unfortunate Princes. They made the most of the relaxa-

tion, and effected their escape, Many romantic incidents are told about this flight from Bokhara. The horse, on which the Ameer fled, fell exhausted by the way-side. So he transferred himself to a caravan, which he chanced to overtake, and escaped detection only by dyeing his beard with ink. The Wullee of Khooloom, with unshaken fidelity, opened his arms to receive his old ally, and placed all his resources at his command.

It was not long before the Ameer again found himself at the head of a considerable force. His family, with the exception of the two sons who had shared his captivity in Bokhara, were in the hands of the British. He knew the danger of his determined course, and when reminded that his wives and children were in our power, sorrowfully replied, "I have no family; I have buried my wives and children." As the Oosbeg fighting men flocked to the standards of Dost Mahomed and the Wullee of Khooloom, the hopes of the former seemed to rise; and his determination to strike a vigorous blow for the recovery of his lost empire, gathered strength and consistency. To have cut up the Bameean detachment, and emerging from the Hindoo-Koosh, to have appeared on the plains below flushed with victory, raising the old war-cry in the name of the Prophet, and profiting by the unpopularity of Shah Soojah and his supporters, in that part of the country, would have been a noble achivement—one which would have rendered easy his triumphant progress to the very walls of the capital. He determined to make the effort; and early in September advanced upon Bameean, with a force of six or eight thousand men.

The month of September brought with it no mitigation of the anxieties of the envoy. From the country beyond the Hindoo-Koosh came exaggerated tidings of the successful progress of Dost Mahomed. "It is reported to-day," wrote Macnaghten on the 3rd, "that all Toorkistan

is in arms against the Feringhees and the *Moofsids* (rebels) here are very hard at work. It is certain that Hybuk has fallen to the Dost, and it is probable that Codrington will have to retire on Syghan. I put the best face on matters, and a slight success which our troops had at Bajgah over a party of the enemy, furnishes me with the foundation of a good story."

But this good story soon became a bad one. On the 30th of August the Oosbegs had attacked Bajgah; and the Goorkhas under Codrington, aided by Rattray with some Afghan horse, had driven back the assailants. But it was plain that this isolated post, in the midst of a hostile population, was no longer tenable. It was expedient, therefore, to fall back upon Syghan. So Bajgah was evacuated. The Goorkhas commenced their retreat; and then it was pronounced that Syghan could not be held against a large body of hostile troops. It was determined, therefore, that they would fall back upon Bameean. They lost everything upon the retreat. We had pushed on our outposts to those remote points, only to abandon them disastrously on the first appearance of the enemy.

But there was something far worse than this. A regiment of Afghan infantry had been raised, and Captain Hopkins commanded it. It was the commencement of an attempt to establish a national army for the support of the throne. Its loyalty was now to be put to the proof, by placing it within the reach of all those sinister influences which were most likely to undermine it. The result may be readily anticipated. The atmosphere of the Hindoo-Koosh, and the contiguity of Dost Mahomed, were fatal to the fidelity of the corps. The Afghan soldiers, headed by their commandant, Saleh Mahomed,*

* Saleh Mahomed, of whom mention will be made in a subsequent

deserted their colours; and a number of them joined the enemy.

Day after day, the tidings brought to Macnaghten were more and more distressing. All Afghanistan seemed ripe for revolt. "We are in a stew here," he wrote to Rawlinson on the 6th of September, "perhaps greater than the occasion warrants; but our situation is far from comfortable. It is reported that the whole country on this side the Oxus, is up in favour of the Dost, who, with the Wullee, is certainly advancing in great strength; so much so that our troops have been obliged to fall back upon Bameean, whilst we have a formidable band of conspirators in the city, and the Kohistan is ripe for revolt. These matters of course engross my serious attention, and I have about fifty chits to answer every half-hour. . . . . We are wretchedly weak, having only three infantry regiments, including one of the Shah's. We have been compelled to send off the 35th to reinforce the garrison at Bameean, but still we are strong enough, I hope, in a fair field, to lick all the *Moofsids* that could be brought against us."

Macnaghten's worst fears were confirmed. Caubul now seemed to be on the eve of an insurrection. On the 9th, the Envoy, in perturbation of mind, wrote again to Rawlinson at Candahar: "The town is in a very feverish state. Some people are shutting up their shops; others, sending their families away; and some active measures must be taken for stopping the panic. We have taken possession of the gate of the Balla Hissar by a guard from Craigie's regiment, and brought the mountain train inside the citadel. The apparently insignificant fact of Mesdames Trevor and Marsh having come up to the Balla Hissar from the town,

part of this narrative, told Captain Johnson that the conduct of the European non-commissioned officers had disgusted him and his men, and moved them to desert.

has created a great sensation. We are sending out a party to watch the Charekar Pass, and Sanders goes with them; so that between force and conciliation and intrigue (in which art, I am sorry to tell you, I have now taken my degree), I hope we shall be more than a match for the Dost. But I have an anxious time of it, as you may imagine."

But in the midst of all these perplexities he thought still of the "great game"—of the annexation of Herat and the subjugation of the Punjab—and chafed under the restraints which Lord Auckland had imposed upon him. "I had a letter," he wrote, "from Lord Auckland yesterday, and from that I gather that his Lordship's intentions are essentially pacific, both as regards Herat and the Punjab. Oh! for a Wellesley or a Hastings at this juncture. By a most ingenious process, he has substituted the cause for the effect, or rather the effect for the cause. He says, so long as we are continually agitating the question of taking possession of Peshawur and Herat, we cannot expect honest co-operation from the powers owning those places; thus overlooking, or affecting to overlook, the fact, that but for the dishonesty of those powers the question would never have been contemplated by us. This drivelling is beneath contempt. I shall now send up the proofs I have obtained (and they are tolerably strong) of the perfidy of the Sikhs without note or comment, and leave the rest to Providence. I shall adopt the same course with regard to the intrigues of Yar Mahomed."

Day after day, the clouds gathering over Caubul grew denser and darker. An open enemy was in the field, and a false friend—our ally of the famous Tripartite treaty—was insidiously pushing his intrigues up to the very gates of the Balla Hissar. On the 12th of September, Macnaghten, weary and dispirited, wrote to the Governor-

General, saying:—"I am much fatigued, having been severely worked the whole day; but I write these few lines just to apprise your Lordship that affairs in this quarter have the worst possible appearance. The whole Kohistan is reported to be ripe for revolt, though possibly in this there may be some exaggeration; and we hear of resolutions to rise in other parts of the country. But the worst news of all is that received from Dr. Lord this morning, to the effect that an entire company of Captain Hopkins's corps has gone off with its arms and accoutrements to join Dost Mahomed Khan, and it is fully expected that their example will be followed by the whole regiment. Dost Mahomed Khan is said to be advancing with his entire force; but Dr. Lord's intelligence seems very defective. I have just had a note from Sir W. Cotton, in which he observes: 'I really think the time has now arrived for you and I to tell Lord Auckland, *totidem verbis*, that circumstances have proved incontestably that there is no Afghan army, and that unless the Bengal troops are instantly strengthened, we cannot hold the country.' I have long since, and strongly and repeatedly, urged my opinion that another brigade should be sent to us. I have also pointed out that there is no such thing as an Afghan army, and I have incessantly urged my earnest opinion to the effect that our position here would be most perilous unless a stop were put to Sikh intrigues. They have now been allowed to go on till the country is thoroughly convulsed by them. Up to this moment Syud Mahomed Khan, one of the Barukzye triumvirate, is carrying into effect his iniquitous designs against his Majesty's Government. Caubul is full of Sikh emissaries, and letters were yesterday intercepted from the Sikh agent to the address, amongst others, of Nao Nehal Singh, which clearly shows the *animus* by which the Sikhs are actuated towards their allies of the Tripartite treaty.

The Sikh agent acknowledged the letters were his own. He did not know they had been opened."

The 18th of September was a memorable day. It was the turning-point of our fortunes in Afghanistan. On that day the anxieties of the British minister were at their height. Never was the aspect of affairs more threatening—never was there so little to cheer and encourage the perplexed political chief. The pale cast of despondency was over all his thoughts. His physical and mental energies were alike beginning to fail. "At no period of my life," he wrote on that 18th of September, "do I remember having been so much harassed in body and mind as during the past month. Nor is my uneasiness yet much lessened. The Afghans are gunpowder, and the Dost is a lighted match. Of his whereabouts we are wonderfully ignorant. I have no hope that he will attack Bameean, and I have great fear that he will throw himself into the Kohistan, where, it is said, the whole country will rise in his favour. But I am weary of conjecture; and we must make the best preparation we can against every possible contingency. Not the least of my vexations arises from our inability to depute Shah-zadah Timour at the present moment. But his presence in the Kohistan is indispensably necessary. He sets out this evening attended by all the chivalry of Caubul."

But upon that very 18th of September—perhaps whilst the British minister, in perturbation and despondency of mind, was tracing these very lines, and looking, with painful forebodings of evil, for intelligence from the Hindoo-Koosh, the detachment of troops, long shut up in those dreary mountain fastnesses, now reinforced from Caubul, were achieving a great and decisive victory over the forces of Dost Mahomed and the Wullee of Khooloom, and changing the entire aspect of affairs in those remote Caucasian regions.

On the 14th, the reinforcements under Brigadier Dennie had reached Bameean. It was currently reported that, on that day, Dost Mahomed would attack our position. Nothing, however, was seen of his army, and contradictory reports of his movements continued to pour into camp. From the stories which were circulated at Bameean, and the contents of the letters divulged by the neighbouring chiefs, it appeared that the Ameer had not yet fully determined whether to make a descent upon our detachment, or to avoid the contest. From Kamurd he wrote to one chief: "For God's sake, tell me the news! Will the Feringhees run or fight?" To the Sirdars of the Afghan corps that has just before deserted, he wrote that all Toorkistan had joined him, and that he had 40,000 men at his call. In all his letters he declared that he had taken up arms for the honour of his religion, and called upon all true believers to flock to the holy standard of the Prophet.

Brigadier Dennie's first measure, upon reaching Bameean, was to disarm the apostate Afghan corps. He then began to bethink himself of marching upon Sŷghan to meet the advancing troops of the Ameer. But the enemy were then nearer than he anticipated. On the evening of the 17th, he obtained intelligence to the effect that some advanced bodies of cavalry were "entering the valley from the great defile in our front," six miles from Bameean; and on the following morning it was reported that they had attacked a friendly village which had claims to the protection of our troops. The Brigadier resolved, therefore, to expel them. It was believed that they constituted the advanced guard of the Ameer's army under his son Afzul Khan. On the morning of the 18th, a detachment was ordered out to drive the enemy from the valley. Soon after eight o'clock, two horse-artillery guns under Lieutenant Murray Mackenzie, two companies of the 35th Native Infantry, two companies of the Goorkha corps, and about 400 Afghan

horse, marched out to meet the enemy. About half an hour afterwards, Dennie, with two more companies of the Native Infantry regiment, and two also of the Goorkha corps, followed in support of the advanced detachment. Instead of coming merely upon the advance of the enemy, the Brigadier found an army in his front.

But in spite of the slender force at his command, and the overwhelming numbers of the enemy, Dennie did not hesitate for a moment. His men were eager to advance; and he himself was full of confidence and courage. The enemy had got possession of a chain of forts reaching to the mouth of the defile, and were collected in bodies round the several forts, and upon the hills on either side of the valley. Mackenzie's guns began to play upon them. A little while the Oosbegs stood the fire; but the guns were nobly served, and the shrapnel practice told with terrific effect on dense bodies of men who had nothing to give back in return. The Oosbegs fell back, and, as they retreated, the guns were pushed forward; and first from one distance, then from another, opened a destructive fire upon the wavering disconcerted enemy. The Oosbeg force was soon broken to pieces; and our cavalry were then let slip in pursuit. Following the disordered masses for some miles along the defile, they cut down large numbers of the enemy, and dispersed them in all directions. Dost Mahomed and his son are said to have owed their lives to the fleetness of their horses.

Intelligence of this victory soon reached Caubul, and was received with the liveliest emotions of joy by the British Resident. His spirits rose at once. Again he began to look at the present without alarm, and into the future without despondency. Never was a victory so much wanted as in that month of September, and never did one promise so many good results.

"The Dost had only one weapon," wrote Macnaghten on

the 21st, to Major Rawlinson, "that was religion, and he certainly wielded it most skilfully. I think the Oosbegs will now abandon him. Lord has offered handsome terms to the Wullee, and should this fail, I am not without hope that Meer Mahomed Beg will seize the present opportunity of revenging himself on his old enemy."

The attempt to detach the Wullee of Khooloom from his alliance with Dost Mahomed was crowned with complete success. Doubtless Mackenzie's guns were the great suasive power. The battle of Bameean must have shown the Oosbeg chief the hopelessness of further resistance; and as Dennie was moving on to Syghan, it was prudent to come at once to terms. Lieutenant Rattray was sent forward to arrange a meeting between the Wullee and Dr. Lord; and on the 28th of September, on the summit of the Dundun-i-Shikun, the British political agent and the Oosbeg chief entered into engagements, by which the latter bound himself not to harbour or assist Dost Mahomed, or any member of his family. The country to the south of Syghan was ceded to Shah Soojah; that to the north of it to the Wullee; and a telescope, which he said had been promised, and which he was hurt at not having received before, was given to the latter in completion of the bargain.

But these favourable results were but local and incidental. "I am like a wooden spoon," said Dost Mahomed; "you may throw me hither and thither, but I shall not be hurt." Defeated on the Hindoo-Koosh, he reappeared in the Kohistan. Disaffection was rife throughout that part of the Douranee Empire. The chiefs had begun to feel the evils of the new revenue system, or rather the manner of its administration, which rendered the tax-gatherer something more than a name. Supported by British power, the executive officers of the Shah no longer stood in awe of the petty chieftains, who

soon began to murmur against the change of government, and to lay all their grievances at the door of the Feringhees. Thus irritated and exasperated, they were in a temper to welcome back the Barukzye Sirdar. More than one fortress was in the hand of a recusant chief; and it was apprehended that the presence of Dost Mahomed would set the whole country in a blaze.*

In such a conjuncture it became necessary *to do something* in the Kohistan. But it was not easy to determine what. A blow was to be struck, and the chapter of accidents was to determine how and in what direction it should fall. Accordingly, in the last week of September, a force under Sir Robert Sale was ordered to take the field. Sir Alexander Burnes accompanied it, and directed its movements. At the entrance of the Ghorebund Pass was a fortified village, and a chain of detached forts, belonging to a hostile chief, who was known to be in league with the fugitive Ameer. The name of this place was Tootundurrah. On the 29th of September, Sale invested the enemy's position. The resistance was very slight. The fire of our guns and the advance of the infantry column soon compelled its evacuation, and the place was speedily in possession of the British troops. The success was complete, and would have been cheaply purchased; but one fell there, who, mourned in anguish of spirit by the Envoy, was lamented by the whole force. Edward Conolly, a lieutenant of cavalry, one of three accomplished and enterprising brothers, who had followed the fortunes of their distinguished relative, Sir William Macnaghten, and obtained employment under the British Mission, had on that very morning joined Sale's force as a volunteer.

* Major Pottinger, who was subsequently employed as Political Agent in this part of the country, has left on record an account of the causes of this general disaffection, a part of which will be found in the Appendix.

He was acting as aide-de-camp to the General; when, as the column advanced, he was struck down by a shot from the enemy's position. The bullet entered his heart. "My mind was in too disturbed a state all day yesterday," wrote the Envoy on the 1st of October, "to admit of my writing to you. Poor Edward Conolly (Arthur's next brother) has been killed by a dubious hand at a petty fortress in Kohistan. Never did a nobler or a kinder spirit inhabit a human frame. Poor fellow! he was shot through the heart, and I believe he was the only individual on our side killed during the operations of the 29th, when three forts belonging to the chief rebel in the country were taken. The whole of the chiefs of the Kohistan have now taken to flight. This is a result I by no means anticipated; my wish was to punish some, and to conciliate others. As it is, I fear that Dost Mahomed Khan will now be received by them with open arms. There never was such a set of villains. They came in here, and bound themselves to serve the Shah under the most solemn oaths conceivable, and yet they had not returned to their homes half an hour before they reopened their correspondence with Dost Mahomed. Their punishment became indispensable, for they would shortly have had Dost Mahomed amongst them; and now there is a possibility of their having imbibed so wholesome a terror of our arms as to prevent their ever again assuming an offensive attitude." *

* Writing on the 1st of October, the Envoy thus sketched the aspect of affairs: "The result of the victory at Bameean has not been by any means such as I could have wished. Dost Mahomed will not come in, and the Wullee of Khooloom will not give him up. The latter has omitted to reply to Dr. Lord's last overture, so I imagine we must retreat from Syghan, *re infectâ*. Two of the Dost's sons have escaped from Ghizni, and they will no doubt endeavour, and probably with success, to raise a disturbance in the Ghilzye country. In short, the aspect of affairs is by no means agreeable, and we shall have abundance

Having destroyed the defences of Tootunqurrah, Sale advanced on the 3rd of October to the attack of Joolgah —another fortified position held by the Kohistanee rebels. The walls of this place were too thick to be easily breached, and too high to be easily escaladed. The guns were light; the scaling ladders were short; and the enemy on the crest of the breach offered the most determined resistance. The storming party, led by Colonel Tronson, of the 13th Light Infantry, advanced to the attack with a desperate gallantry worthy of a more distinguished success. Many of the leading men were shot dead in the breach; the struggle to effect a lodgment was ineffectual; and the column was eventually withdrawn. Repulsed, but not disheartened by failure, the British troops were preparing to renew the attack, when the enemy, dreading the recommencement of hostilities, left the fort in the hands of the besiegers. The works were destroyed; and so far the movement was successful—but the failure of the assault deeply mortified the Envoy. "I have bad news to send you," he wrote on the 4th of October; "our arms have met with a reverse at Joolgah in the Kohistan.* A storm and escalade was attempted, but it would not do. The enemy evacuated the place in the evening; but I fear that the whole of the Moofsids (rebels) have escaped. . . . . Burnes represents the country as being in a very unsettled state; and I fear that it will be necessary for his Majesty to remain in Caubul this winter. I intend to write and tell Lord

of work on our hands for next season. Bajore, Khooloom, and divers other places it will be requisite to visit with our arms before the country can be called settled. Amongst a bigoted people accustomed to anarchy, it never can be difficult to scatter the seeds of rebellion."—[*MS. Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*]

* *MS. Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.* The Envoy took a very gloomy view of this affair. In another letter, he says, "You will have heard of the disaster at Joolgah, which I think was a worse affair than that of Pushoot."

Auckland that he must send us reinforcements *viâ* the Punjab. The Dost was last heard of at Kanjau; but I have no doubt of his soon entering Nijrow. Would it be justifiable to set a price on this fellow's head? We have intercepted several letters from him, from all of which it appears that he meditates fighting with us so long as the breath is in his body."

During that month of October, to the annoyance and embarrassment of the political officers and the discomfort of the troops, Dost Mahomed was flitting about from place to place, with no intelligible plan of action to give it any shape and consistency to our counter-operations. Various were the reports which reached the British camp; various the accounts of the nature of his movements and the number of his adherents. Many of these were of the most conflicting character;—and the best-informed officers in the British camp were beset with doubt and perplexity. On the 11th of October it was known that the Ameer was in the valley of Ghorebund. "I believe that there can be little or no doubt," wrote Macnaghten to Lord Auckland, on the following day, "of Dost Mahomed's having entered Ghorebund, and of his being at this moment within forty or fifty miles distance from Caubul. It is impossible to say what may be the effect of his coming into this neighbourhood. But I apprehend very serious consequences, for both the town of Caubul and the country are ripe for revolt. Dr. Lord writes that, as soon as Dost Mahomed heard of Mr. Rattray's approach, he said he would not remain to be sold to the Feringhees, and immediately took the road to Ghorebund. I cannot ascertain how many men he has with him—some accounts say ten thousand, others, three hundred. The last is, I dare say, nearer the mark—but what I dread is, the effect of his incessant intrigues (whilst he is so near us) upon the minds of the population."

Such, indeed, at this time, were the gloomy forebodings which overshadowed the minds of the political chiefs, that they predicted the necessity of concentrating the troops in the Balla Hissar of Caubul, and actually began to talk of making preparations for a siege. Guns were mounted on the citadel to overawe the town. The guards were everywhere increased. The Bameean detachment was ordered to return to the capital with all possible despatch. And Macnaghten began to talk about "submitting to the disgrace of being shut up in Caubul for a time." It was, indeed, a critical moment. It has been seen that the Envoy had begun to contemplate the expediency of setting a price on the Ameer's head. It is a proof alike of the dangers that beset our position in Afghanistan, and the disturbing effects they had wrought upon the minds of our political ministers, that such was the exasperation produced by the apparent success of Dost Mahomed, even upon the kindly nature of the Envoy, that he talked about "showing no mercy to the man who was the author of all the evil now distracting the country." Shah Soojah had long been eager to "hang the dog;" and now, in conversation with Macnaghten, he taunted him with his mistaken leniency. "I suppose you would, even now," said the King, "if I were to catch the dog, prevent me from hanging him." "It will be time enough," said the Envoy, "to talk about that when your Majesty has caught him." The British minister was about to take his leave, when the Shah arrested him, and said: "You know I have from the first expressed to you a mean opinion of my own countrymen. If you want further proofs, look at *that* from my own brother." He then placed in the Envoy's hands an intercepted letter to the address of the Barukzye chief, Sultan Mahomed, proposing that, with his aid, and that of the Sikhs, Shah Zemaun should be placed on the throne, as Shah Soojah had made over the country to the dominion

of infidels. The letter bore the seal of the old blind king himself. It was on the following day that the Envoy wrote to the Governor-General that no mercy should be shown to the Ameer; but he added, "should he be so fortunate as to secure the person of Dost Mahomed, I shall request his Majesty not to execute him till I can ascertain your Lordship's sentiments." *

In the mean while, the force under Sir Robert Sale had moved, in pursuit of the Ameer, into the Nijrow country. On the 18th they were encamped near Kardurrah; and on the 20th were meditating an attack on the place. The Envoy, who watched their proceedings with extreme anxiety, was impatient of the seeming dilatoriness of their movements; and wrote to one of his colleagues: "Burnes and Sale, with nearly 2000 good infantry, are sitting down before a fortified position about twenty miles distant, and are afraid to attack it. The enemy made an attack upon them the night before last—killed and wounded some of our people, and got off unscathed. All this is very bad." But it was not in reality so bad as it seemed to the perplexed and anxious minister at Caubul. Whilst he was writing, preparations were in progress for an attack, on the following day. On the morning of the 21st the force was ready and eager for action. But as the troops advanced, fresh and in good spirits, upon Kardurrah, a party of villagers met them with tidings to the effect that the enemy had abandoned their position, and that the place was without an inhabitant. If any feelings of mortification welled up on the discovery that the garrison had escaped our toils, they very quickly subsided. It was plain that the enemy had made a great mistake, and that the British force had providentially been delivered from a great danger. The position that the "rebels" had aban-

* *Sir W. H. Macnaghten to Lord Auckland: October* 31, 1840. *Unpublished Correspondence.*

doned was one of uncommon strength, and, had it been defended with any spirit, could only have been carried, if at all, after a large expenditure of life.

Dost Mahomed was now in the Nijrow country. His cause seemed to gather strength. Even some of Shah Soojah's soldiers deserted their British officers and flocked to the Ameer's standard. On the 27th of October he broke ground, and moved down towards the capital. On the 29th, intelligence of his movements having reached the British camp at Bhag-alum, the force marched out to intercept the enemy. The two following days were employed by the engineer officers in reconnoitring and surveying the surrounding country; and on the 1st of November the force encamped before Meer-Musjedee's fort. Here it was ascertained that they were in the neighbourhood of the enemy, and preparations were made to give battle to the Ameer and his adherents.

On the 2nd of November—a day which has obtained a melancholy celebrity in the annals of the English in Afghanistan—the British force came at last in sight of the enemy. The army of the Ameer was posted in the valley of Purwandurrah. The Nijrow hills were bristling with the armed population of a hostile country. Unprepared for the conflict, Dost Mahomed had no design, on that November morning, of giving battle to the Feringhees. An unexpected movement precipitated the collision. On the first appearance of the British troops the Ameer evacuated the village of Purwandurrah and the neighbouring forts; and was moving off to a position on some elevated ground commanded by a steep hill to the rearward, when, at the suggestion of Dr. Lord, the British cavalry were moved forward to outflank the Afghan horse.

It was a clear bright morning. The yellow foliage of autumn glittered like gold in the broad sunlight. The opposite hills were alive with the enemy. The crisp fresh

air, so bracing and invigorating to the human frame, seemed to breathe confidence and courage. Dost Mahomed, who, since his defeat at Bameean, had been often heard of, but never seen, by the British troops, and who seemed to elude the grasp of the Army of Occupation like an *ignis fatuus*, was now actually within their reach. It ought to have been an hour of triumph. It was one of humiliation. The Afghans were on the hills skirting one side of the pass; the British troops were on the opposite declivity. Dost Mahomed saw our cavalry advancing, and from that moment cast behind him all thought of retreat. At the head of a small band of horsemen, strong, sturdy Afghans, but badly mounted, he prepared to meet his assailants. Beside him rode the bearer of the blue standard which marked his place in the battle. He pointed to it; reined in his horse; then snatching the white *lunghi* from his head, stood up in his stirrups uncovered before his followers, and called upon them, in the name of God and the Prophet, to drive the cursed Kaffirs from the country of the faithful. "Follow me," he cried aloud, "or I am a lost man." Slowly, but steadily, the Afghan horsemen advanced. The English officers, who led our cavalry to the attack, covered themselves with glory. The native troopers fled like sheep. Emboldened by the craven conduct of the British cavalry, the Afghan horsemen rode forward, driving their enemy before them, and charging right up to the position of the British, until almost within reach of our guns.* The Afghan sabres told, with cruel effect, upon our mounted men. Lieutenants Broadfoot and Crispin were cut to pieces. A treacherous shot from a neighbouring bastion brought Dr. Lord to the ground; and the dagger of the assassin completed the work of death.

* Some of the troopers were pursued for a considerable distance. "I learn," wrote the Envoy, on November 6, "that two squadrons of them were pursued for a mile or two by twenty Douranees."

Captains Fraser and Ponsonby, whose gallantry has never been surpassed even in the annals of old Roman heroism, still live to show their honourable scars; and to tell, with mingled pride and humiliation, the story of that melancholy day.

In front of our columns, flaunting the national standard, the Afghans stood for some time masters of the field, and then quietly withdrew from the scene of battle. Sir Alexander Burnes, awed by this disaster, wrote to Sir William Macnaghten that there was nothing left for the force but to fall back upon Caubul, and implored the Envoy there to concentrate all our troops. Sir William received the letter on the 3rd of November, as he was taking his evening ride in the outskirts of the city. His worst forebodings seemed to be confirmed. Little did he know what thoughts were stirring in the breast of the Ameer. Dost Mahomed, in the very hour of victory, felt that it was hopeless to contend against the power of the British Government. He had too much sagacity not to know that his success at Purwandurrah must eventually tend, by moving the British to redouble their exertions, rather to hasten than to retard the inevitable day of his final destruction. He quitted the field in no mood of exultation; with no bright visions of the future before him. He had won the last throw, but the final issue had ceased to be a matter of speculation. The hour in which, with dignity and grace, he might throw himself upon the protection of his enemies, now seemed to have arrived. He had met the British troops in the field, and, at the head of a little band of horsemen, had driven back the cavalry of the Feringhees. His last charge had been a noble one; he might now retire from the contest without a blot upon his name.

So thought the Ameer; as was his wont, taking counsel of his saddle. None knew in the British camp the direc-

tion he had taken; none guessed the character of his thoughts. On the day after the victory of Purwandurrah he was under the walls of Caubul. He had been four-and-twenty hours in the saddle; but betrayed little symptoms of fatigue. A single horseman attended him. As they approached the residence of the British Envoy, they saw an English gentleman returning from his evening ride. The attendant galloped forward to satisfy himself of the identity of the rider, and being assured that the Envoy was before him, said that the Ameer was at hand. "What Ameer?" asked Macnaghten. "Dost Mahomed Khan," was the answer; and presently the chief himself rode up to the British minister. Throwing himself from his horse, Dost Mahomed saluted the Envoy, said he was come to claim his protection, and placed his sword in Macnaghten's hand. But the Envoy returning it to him, desired the Ameer to remount. They then rode together into the Mission compound—Dost Mahomed asking many eager questions about his family as they went. A tent having been pitched for his accommodation, he wrote letters to his sons, exhorting them to follow his example and seek the protection of the British Government.

He seemed to have become reconciled to his fate. He had no wish, he said, to escape. Force, indeed, would not drive him to abandon the refuge he had voluntarily sought. With Macnaghten he conversed freely of his past history; and raised, by the recital alike of his doings and his sufferings, the strongest feelings of admiration and compassion in the Envoy's breast. Every effort was made to soothe the Ameer's feelings; and he soon became serene and cheerful. A report that it was the design of our government to banish him to London, disturbed his equanimity for a time; but he was soon reassured by the promises of the Envoy, and began to look forward with hopefulness to a life of repose and security in the Company's dominions.

A few days after his surrender, his eldest son, Afzul Khan, came into the British camp.

A prisoner, but an honoured one, Dost Mahomed remained some ten days at Caubul, during which time all the leading officers of the garrison paid him the most marked attention. Men, who kept aloof from Shah Soojah, as one to be religiously avoided, were eager to present themselves before the unfortunate Ameer, and to show that they respected him in his fallen fortunes. He received his visitors with courtesy, and conversed with them with freedom. Seated on the ground, he desired them to be seated; and seemed to take pleasure in the society of the brave men who did him honour. Captain Nicolson, an officer of distinguished gallantry and great intelligence, whose early death on the banks of the Sutlej is to be deeply deplored, having been selected by Sir W. Macnaghten to fill the difficult and delicate office of custodian to the fallen prince, acted, on these occasions, as interpreter. It may be doubted whether a single officer quitted his presence without drawing a comparison between the Ameer and the Shah, very much to the disadvantage of the latter. The King refused to see his prisoner, alleging that he would not be able to bring himself to show common civility to such a villain. "This is well," said the Envoy, writing to the Private Secretary of the Governor-General, "as the Dost must have suffered much humiliation in being subjected to such an ordeal." All the natural kindliness of the Envoy now set in towards the fallen prince, and all the courtesies of the English gentleman were freely bestowed upon him.

On the 12th of November, 1840, Dost Mahomed Khan, under a strong escort,* commenced his journey towards

* A detachment of our troops was then returning to India. The Company's European regiment, and Captain Garbett's troop of Horse Artillery, marched from Caubul; and the 48th Native Infantry joined

the provinces of India; and two months afterwards Macnaghten wrote:

"I trust that the Dost will be treated with liberality. His case has been compared to that of Shah Soojah; and I have seen it argued that he should not be treated more handsomely than his Majesty was; but surely the cases are not parallel. The Shah had no claim upon us. We had no hand in depriving him of his kingdom, whereas we ejected the Dost, who never offended us, in support of our policy, of which he was the victim." *

And so Macnaghten, in a few lines of irrepressible truth and candour, denounced the injustice of the policy of which he himself had been one of the originators. It is possible, too, that Lord Auckland may have felt that Dost Mahomed "never offended us," but that we had victimised him; for he received the Prince he had deposed with becoming hospitality and respect, and burdened the revenues of India with a pension in his favour of two lakhs of rupees.

the escort at Jellalabad. At the same time, Sir Willoughby Cotton, who had commanded the troops in Afghanistan, set his face towards India: and the command temporarily devolved on Sir R. Sale.

* *Sir W. H. Macnaghten to Mr. Robertson: Jan.* 12, 1841. *MS. Correspondence.*

CHAPTER IV.

[November: 1840—September: 1841.]

Yar Mahomed and the Douranees—Season of Peace—Position of the Douranees—The Zemindawer Outbreak—Conduct of Yar Mahomed—Departure of Major Todd—Risings of the Douranees and Ghilzyes—Engagements with Aktur Khan and the Gooroo—Dispersion of the Insurgents.

THE remainder of the month of November passed away in peace and tranquillity. The Envoy began now for the first time to taste the blessings of repose, and to enjoy the advantages of leisure. But his active mind was soon again busily at work. Dost Mahomed had surrendered; but the Sikhs had not been coerced. The time for the "macadamisation" of the Punjab seemed now to have arrived. To the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces of India, he wrote on the 24th of November, of the "piping times of peace, so unfavourable to the exercise of the epistolary art," and of the "cards which played so beautifully into his hands." "This is the time," he added, "for a subsidiary force in the Punjab, and for the cession of the districts to the west of the Indus. We are clearly not bound any longer by the Tripartite treaty, and so I have told Lord Auckland; but I don't think his Lordship's ambition will aim at more than keeping matters on their present footing. We start for Jellalabad in three or four days; and it is high time we should do so, as the weather is becoming bitterly cold here. We shall now have a little time to devote to the affairs of the country, and I trust it

condition will be soon as flourishing as its poor resources will admit."*

Before the end of November, the Court were on their way to their winter quarters at Jellalabad. On the morning of the 13th they reached that place. The Envoy found Sir Willoughby Cotton still there, but "anxious to get away;" and Captain Macgregor, the political agent in charge of the district, surrounded by a motley crew of the chiefs of the country, who seemed to look up to him as their common father. In the enjoyment of a little rest from pressing anxieties, the Envoy began to turn his thoughts to the domestic administration of the country. "We have hitherto," he wrote to the Private Secretary of the Governor-General, "been struggling for existence, without any leisure to turn to the improvement of the administration."† And very little of this leisure was even now vouchsafed to him. Though Dost Mahomed was on his way to the provinces of India, and the winter snows had now set in, the struggle for existence was still going on, and more fiercely than ever. The Ghilzyes and Kohistanees had already risen up against the government of the

* *MS. Correspondence.*

† Writing to the same correspondent shortly afterwards, he cautioned him not to expect any very speedy or extensive reforms; and, above all, not to look for any favourable financial results. "By-and-by his Majesty," said the Envoy, "will, I hope, be able to make both ends meet. At present, pecuniary assistance to a considerable extent will be indispensable. As I said when we first reached Candahar, the country must be looked upon as an outwork, requiring large expenditure to keep it in repair. You are a little too sanguine, I think, in your hope of a speedy and universal reform in this country. For thirty years the inhabitants of most of the districts have never paid a fraction of revenue, until they were coerced into payment by the presence of troops. The habit has grown into second nature with them, and we cannot expect them to subside at once into the condition of cheerful tax-payers."—[*Unpublished Correspondence.*]

Shah and his supporters; and now the Douranees were breaking out into revolt.

It has been shown, that on the reappearance of Shah Soojah at Candahar, the Douranees, enfeebled and prostrated by their Barukzye oppressors, clustered around the throne, and sought from the restored monarch the privileges and immunities which had been wrested from them by the Sirdars. Uncertain, at that time, of the ultimate success of the expedition, and eager to swell the number of his adherents, the Shah was willing to grant, and more willing still to promise. He made certain remissions of taxation in favour of the tribes; but he entrusted the execution of these new popular measures to the old unpopular agency; and the Parsewan revenue-collectors, who had oppressed the tribes during the reign of the Sirdars, were still left to exercise their hated calling under the King.

The experiment of giving is a dangerous one. In the ordinary concerns of human life, it is found that the shortcomings of those who give bring down upon them more hatred and more reproach than the withholdings of those who give not. It is perilous to raise hopes not to be fulfilled. The Douranees had looked for much from the restoration of the Shah; and they were disappointed. They had patiently submitted to the exactions and oppressions of the Barukzyes—but the imperfect liberality of the Suddoyze monarch irritated them past endurance. They looked upon the Barukzyes as their natural enemies, and they submitted when they knew that they had no power of resistance. But believing that it was the wish of the restored government of the Shah to conciliate and encourage them, they demonstrated their dissatisfaction in a violent and offensive manner, with the strongest assurance in their mind that their grievances would be redressed. Under the Barukzyes such a course would have been worse

than useless, for their spasms of painful unrest were pleasing to the Sirdars. But as it seemed that the Shah desired to please them, they strove to evince, by most unmistakeable signs, that they were not pleased; and broke out into rebellion.*

In Zemindawer, a district which lies to the north-west of Candahar, symptoms of inquietude began to evince themselves at the end of 1840. At this time, the affairs of Candahar and its neighbourhood were, as regards all European superintendence, under the charge of Major Rawlinson. This officer, who had been employed for some years in Persia,† and on the rupture of our friendly relations with that state, necessarily remanded to India, had been so strongly recommended, for his intimate acquaintance with the languages, the people, and the politics of the East, as well as for his general aptitude and intelligence, by Sir John M'Neill to Lord Auckland, that the Governor-General ordered him to proceed to Caubul, to

* See Major Rawlinson's "Douranee Report," quoted in the Appendix.

† Major Rawlinson went out to India as a cadet on the Bombay Establishment in 1827. He was a fellow-passenger of Sir John Malcolm, from whom he imbibed his earliest taste for Oriental literature. In 1828, having passed, whilst yet a cadet, an examination in the Hindostanee language, he was posted to the 1st Grenadier Regiment, with which he served until 1833. In this interval he passed in two other languages, Mahratta and Persian. In 1833, when Lord William Bentinck despatched a party of officers to Persia to drill the army of Abbas Meerza, Rawlinson, still an ensign, was selected as adjutant of the detachment. In Persia he continued to serve until the rupture with that state. During a space of nearly three years he was in military command of the province of Kermanshah, living entirely among the Persians, and becoming as familiar with their language and literature as with his own. He graduated in diplomacy under Sir John M'Neill, by whom he was entrusted with various political duties, and strongly recommended to Lord Auckland for employment in Afghanistan

be employed under Macnaghten. In the early part of 1840 it had been proposed to despatch Rawlinson and Arthur Conolly on a mission to the camp of the Russian General Peroffski, but the breaking up of the Khivan expedition caused this project to be abandoned; and another field of activity was opened out to Rawlinson in a region less inhospitable and remote. The supervision of affairs at Candahar had hitherto been entrusted to Major Leech; but Leech had given offence to the Envoy by the dilatoriness with which he had sent in his accounts, and it had seemed good to Macnaghten to remove him from his post.* He could not have appointed a better man than Rawlinson to fill it. So, on the 4th of July, he sent to that officer the Shah's official notification of his appointment as political agent at Candahar.

The command of the troops at Candahar was in the hands of Major-General Nott. He was an old Sepoy officer of good repute; a man of some talents, but blunt address —an honest, plain-spoken soldier, not always right, but always believing himself to be right—hearty, genuine, and sincere. His faults were chiefly those of temper. He had not been well used. Sir Henry Fane had recognised his merits; but Sir John Keane, who was accused of fostering a narrow-minded prejudice against the Company's service, had superseded him in a manner which had greatly incensed the General himself, and the army to which he belonged.† Labouring under a strong sense of the injus-

* Other grounds of complaint may have subsequently arisen, but this dilatoriness was the first offence. Leech pleaded in extenuation that he had been removed from one appointment to another, before he had had time to make up the financial statements of his last mission; and sent in a list of no less than *eight* different accounts of which he had to bring up the arrears.—[*Major Leech to Sir W. H. Macnaghten: June* 30, 1840.]

† It would be foreign to the objects of this work to discuss the question of Nott's supercession. It was at one time a fertile subject

tice that had been done him; feeling that his worth had not been duly appreciated, or his services duly rewarded; seeing much in the general management of the affairs of the distracted country in which his lot had been cast to excite his unqualified disapprobation; and being, moreover, constitutionally of an irritable temperament, he sometimes said and wrote what was calculated to offend others; and as the political officers were the especial objects of his dislike, he was in no favour at the Residency. Macnaghten declared that the general's conduct frequently embarrassed him, and recommended, therefore, his recall. But it was felt that Nott was a fine soldier; and, though the Government eventually listened to the Envoy's counsel in this matter, they were slow to remove him from a sphere in which his energy and decision were likely to be so serviceable to the state. And, perhaps, it was felt that, in his political colleague at Candahar, Nott had a man of excellent temper, of great tact and forbearance, and that the difficulty was much lessened by so fortunate an association.

Such were the men upon whom, at the beginning of 1841, devolved the duty of looking this Douranee outbreak fairly in the face. The task that fell to Nott's share was the easier of the two. He had simply to beat the enemy in the field. The insurgents of Zemindawer had risen up against a party of the Shah's horse, who had been sent out to support the revenue officers, and had defeated and dispersed them. A detachment, therefore, was ordered out against them, under Captain Farrington. On the morning of the 3rd of January they came up with the

of discussion in India, involving, as it did, a general question of military rank in the higher grades. General Willshire was an older officer and an older lieutenant-colonel than General Nott, and the Indian Commander-in-Chief had decreed that the relative ranks of the major-generals should be determined, not by the dates of their brevets as such, but by the dates of their lieutenant-colonels' commissions.

rebels. The Dourance horse, some 1200 or 1500 strong, showed a bold front; but the fire of Hawkins's guns was too hot for them, and they began to waver. The infantry well completed what the cavalry had well begun; the insurgents were driven from their position, and were soon broken and dispersed. And so, for the time, the military officer had done his work, and with good success. The political officer had a more difficult duty to perform. Rawlinson was called upon to elucidate the causes of the dissatisfaction of the Douranees, and to recommend the best means of quenching the dangerous spirit of revolt. The causes, doubtless, were numerous, and there were some which lay far beneath the surface. Both in private letters to Macnaghten and in a masterly official report, to which allusion has been made, Rawlinson probed them to their very depths—but his views were not in accordance with those of the Envoy, and his warnings were disregarded.

Macnaghten had at first been willing to believe that this revolt of the Dourances had risen out of the tyrannical interference of unpopular revenue-administrators, which had left them in a mood of mind favourable in the extreme to the designs of any discontented or factious chief who had objects to gain, or resentments to gratify, by stirring the country into rebellion. "Aktur Khan," he wrote to Mr. Colvin, "was disappointed in not getting the chiefship of Zemindawer; and he found the people in a temper to aid his rebellious projects, owing to the oppressions practised by the Wakeel." But he was slow to believe that there was any general feeling of disaffection in the country; that the double government we had established was essentially and necessarily unpopular; or that such occasional outbreaks as he was condemned to witness were the results of anything more than personal and accidental circumstances, from which no general conclusions were to be drawn. He never believed that there was any nation-

ality among the Afghans, or that the presence of the stranger and the Infidel in their land could be a sore continually to fester and to throb.

Still less did he believe it possible that our presence in Afghanistan could be hateful to the King himself, who owed everything to us. But it was reported, and believed by many in the neighbourhood of Candahar, that Shah Soojah had secretly fomented the rebellion of the Douranees. The Shah shook with rage, when this story was told him, and vowed that the man, to whom its authorship had been traced, should pay the penalty of his mendacity by having his tongue cut out at the root. "And I really think," said Macnaghten, "there would be no harm in depriving the rascal of his ears." But there were others who believed then and afterwards, that the old king was as eager as any one of his subjects, to see the white-faced intruders swept from the face of the land; and that he yearned to be in deed, as well as in name, supreme in the Douranee Empire.

To have acknowledged either the unpopularity of our occupation of Afghanistan, or the faithlessness of the King, would have been to have acknowledged the entire failure of our policy. So Macnaghten still continued to seek for accidental causes of the popular discontent, and to talk of superficial remedies. "My own impression is," he wrote to Mr. Colvin, on the 5th of February, "that matters will revert to a wholesome state as soon as ever the incubus of apprehension is removed from the body of the people; and this will be effected by the simple recall of the obnoxious Parsewan managers." But there was another source to which, at this time, he was fain to attribute the inquietude of Western Afghanistan. He suspected, and not without reason, that the disaffection of the Douranees had been fomented by the intrigues of Yar Mahomed. The suspicion soon rose into knowledge. There were undeniable proofs

that the Heratee Wuzeer had been writing inflammatory letters to the Douranee chiefs. He had sent a delegate, named Nussur-ood-deen Khan, into the Zemindawer country, with letters to each of the principal Douranee chiefs, and one of them had forwarded to Lieutenant Elliot, Rawlinson's assistant, a copy of the seditious missive, which ran to the following effect:

Let each of you assemble his followers, and go in to Aktur Khan in Zemindawer, and be ready and prepared, for I have moved out of Herat; and from Meshed, troops 10,000 strong, with twelve guns and two lakhs of rupees, are marching to our assistance. At latest, I shall arrive at Bukhwa by the end of the month Mohurram. Let not any Douranee chief of those now assembled disperse his followers, for I am most assured of coming to join you.

The fact was not to be doubted; but it was in no way the cause of the disorder. It merely aggravated the external symptoms of a deeply-seated disease. Vexatious and embarrassing as was this intelligence, there was worse behind to astound the Envoy, and make him cry out more and more bitterly against the authorities, who had thwarted his long cherished desire to play the "great game." Suddenly there came upon him tidings that the outrages and the exactions—the treachery and the insolence—of Yar Mahomed had reached such a pitch, that Todd had broken up the British Mission, and set his face towards Candahar.

The Wuzeer had long been accommodating his demands to every change in the political barometer. Unfortunately, those changes had indicated little but the depressed circumstances of our position in Afghanistan. The disaster of Major Clibborne; the fall of Khelat; and the progress of Dost Mahomed on the Hindoo-Koosh, were adverse circumstances which encouraged the Wuzeer to rise in his demands for more money, and even to meditate aggressive movements of a more palpable character than any which had yet been undertaken against the power of Shah Soojah

and his supporters. At one time he contemplated an attack upon Candahar, and was anxious that his intentions should be known to the British Mission. The surrender of Dost Mahomed had, however, somewhat checked his presumption; and the descent upon Candahar was postponed.

The knowledge of the Zemindawer outbreak soon caused the project to be revived. Having despatched an emissary to the disaffected country to keep alive the spirit of revolt, Yar Mahomed at the same time sent, secretly and suddenly, a deputation to the Persian governor at Meshed, seeking pecuniary assistance from his government, promising to expel the British mission from Herat, and urging him to unite in an attack on Candahar, whilst the communications between that place and Caubul were cut off by the snow.

This last glaring act of perfidy excited Todd to retaliate. He believed that there was a point of forbearance beyond which it would be disgraceful to his country to descend; so he determined to suspend the payment of the allowance* which had been granted to the state; and, taking advantage of the presence of a large body of troops in Upper Sindh, announced, on the 1st of February, his intention to the Wuzeer. But Yar Mahomed, at this time, was intent on playing a "great game." He believed that his deputation had been favourably received at Meshed; he believed that the Douranees were again working themselves into rebellion; and he had abundant faith in the continued forbearance of the British government. So he played, with his accustomed craft, for a large stake; and little heeded the consequences of failure. The one object of all his intrigues was to obtain money—money for the state—money for himself. On the 8th of

* 25,000 rupees (2500*l.*) *per mensem.*

February he came forward with a string of specific demands. He asked for two lakhs of rupees to pay his own debts; he asked for an increased monthly allowance to his Government, to be guaranteed for a year; he asked for further improvement of the fortifications of Herat at the expense of the British Government; he asked for loans of money to enable Herat to recover possession of its lost territories, the troops to be subsisted in the field at our expense; and he asked for a written agreement to relieve him "from all apprehension for the future." He knew well what he merited at our hands, and years afterwards justified his conduct to the British Mission, on the ground that he dreaded the influence of our officers, and felt that his very existence was at stake.

To these extravagant demands Todd gave an answer regulated by his knowledge of the forbearing course, which his Government desired him to pursue. He told the Wuzeer that before he could comply, even in a modified form, with such requests, he should require some guarantee that such concessions would not be thrown away. Yar Mahomed had some time before declared his willingness to admit a British garrison into Herat. If this were now done, some of his demands might be granted. Yar Mahomed clutched at this; but turning the proposed garrison into a British force to be located in the valley of Herat, declared that, on the payment of two lakhs of rupees, he would give his assent to the measure. Never had he the shadow of an intention of fulfilling his part of the contract—but he wanted the money. His sincerity was soon tested. Todd demanded that the Wuzeer's son should be sent to Ghiresk, there to await an answer from the Government of India, and to escort, if the measure were approved, the British troops to Herat; and it was added, that on the Sirdar's arrival at that place the money demanded would be paid. But Yar Mahomed at once

refused his assent to Todd's proposal. He required the immediate payment of the money or the departure of the Mission. So the British agent chose the latter alternative, and turned his back upon Herat.

Never before, perhaps, had the British Government been so insulted and so outraged in the person of its representatives. Shah Kamran, at a private audience, told one of the officers of the Mission that, but for his protection, "not a Feringhee would have been left alive;" and asked if he did not deserve some credit for not acting towards Todd and his companions as the Ameer of Bokhara had acted towards Colonel Stoddart. Yar Mahomed had intercepted Todd's letters to Candahar. He had been for some time in an habitual state of intoxication. The seizure of the persons of the British officers, and the plunder of their property, had been openly discussed by the Wuzeer and his profligate friends, and there is little doubt that, if the Mission had remained longer at Herat, the members of it would have been subjected to indignities of the worst kind.

The Mission left Herat, and halted for a time at Ghiresk. When the tidings of its abrupt departure reached Lord Auckland at Calcutta, he was roused into a state of very unwonted exacerbation. He was not a hasty man—he was not an unjust one. But on this occasion he committed an act both hasty and unjust. He at once repudiated the proceedings of Major Todd at Herat; and removed him from political employment.

"I am writhing in anger and in bitterness," he wrote to the Lieutenant-Governor of Agra, "at Major Todd's conduct at Herat, and have seen no course open to me, in regard to it, but that of discarding and disavowing him; and we have directed his dismissal to the provinces. What we have wanted in Afghanistan has been repose under an exhibition of strength, and he has wantonly, and

against all orders, done that which is most likely to produce general disquiet, and which may make our strength inadequate to the calls upon it. I look upon a march to Herat as perfectly impracticable; and if it were not so, I should look upon it, under present circumstances, as most inexpedient. We have taught Yar Mahomed to be more afraid of us than of the Persians. It is possible that, when he has been left a little time to himself, he will be more afraid of the Persians than of us—but, in the mean time, the state to which things have been brought is a cause of much anxiety and more apprehension to me."

That, in one sense, the Heratee Mission failed, is certain; but, there were some of Todd's measures which did not fail, and it is not to be forgotten that on his own responsibility he despatched Abbott and Shakespear to Khiva, and the good that was done by these Missions was often in the retrospect a solace to him in after days, when smarting under the injustice of his masters.* Substantial

* I cannot refrain from quoting here a letter on this subject from Todd to Outram, written before his removal from political employment:

"Your kind letter of November 3rd reached me a few days ago. I would fain send you an adequate return, but I am out of sorts, and, besides, have but little to tell you. Shakespear's proceedings have been in all respects admirable. The zeal, perseverance, and judgment he has displayed throughout his arduous undertaking, entitle him to the highest praise; and I trust he will be rewarded as he deserves. The property restored by Russia is valued at upwards of a crore of rupees; and the number of merchants and others released, exceeds 600. The news was received at Khiva with every demonstration of joy; and Shakespear's name has been inserted in the calendar of Oosbeg saints! The Russians, by liberating their captives immediately on the arrival of Shakespear and his 'company,' have given a strong proof that they are unwilling or unable to renew their attempt on Khiva; and I hope that they will now be prevented taking up that formidable position on the road to India. I cannot help congratulating myself on even the small share which I have had in these proceedings. Had I waited for orders, the Russians might have been within a few

benefits, too, were conferred on the people of Herat—benefits still remembered with gratitude, and seldom spoken of without some expression of respect and admiration for their benefactors. The unceasing charities and the blameless lives of the officers of the Mission raised the character of the British nation as it was raised in no other part of Afghanistan. But Lord Auckland never forgave the diplomatic failure. Todd's departure from Herat was inopportune; for, although he had no reason to believe the settlement of our differences with Persia was any nearer to its consummation than it had been for some time, they were then on the eve of adjustment. Had he known this, he would have braved everything and remained at Herat, encouraged by the thought that the re-establishment of our amicable relations with Persia would effectually cripple the power and restrain the audacity of the Heratee minister. Remanded to his regiment, Todd proceeded to join it at the head-quarters

marches of Khiva; and had we been satisfied with the tales of Sir Alexander's agents, we should have now believed the Russians 300,000 strong, and to be within as short a distance of Caubul. The road between Teheran and this place is infested by roving bands of Toorkomans, who have been let loose on Persian Khorassan by the Khan of Khiva. His Highness thinks that he is thus doing us service; but I have written to undeceive him in this matter, and I have pointed out to him that the practice of man-stealing is abhorrent to us, whether the man be a Russian or a Persian. His conduct on this occasion reminds me of an answer given to me by Mahomed Shah's Wuzeer, one Meerza Mahomed, a great oaf. I had been superintending some artillery practice at Teheran. A jackass having been placed at the target, I remonstrated against the cruelty of putting up one of God's creatures as a mark, when wood or canvas would answer every purpose. The Wuzeer replied, 'On my eyes be it, I will stick up a pony next time.' As if I had specially pleaded the case of jackasses.

"Sheil thinks that the prospect of a settlement of our differences with Persia is as distant as ever, and is strongly opposed to my plan of allowing the Shah to keep Ghorian, and retaining possession of Kharrack."

of the Artillery at Dum-Dum. "Equal to either fortune," he fell back upon the common routine of regimental service, and, in command of a company of Foot Artillery, devoted himself with as much earnest and assiduous zeal to the minutiæ of military duty, as he had done, a year before, to the affairs of the Herat Mission. It has often been said that political employ unfits a man for regimental duty; but Major Todd, from the time that he first rejoined his regiment to the hour of his death, never slackened in his attention to his military duties; and, perhaps, in the whole range of the service, there was not a more zealous, a more assiduous—in other words, a more conscientious regimental officer than the old antagonist of Yar Mahomed. The trait of character here illustrated is a rarer one than may be supposed. Nothing in his political life became him like the leaving of it. There are few who know how, gracefully, to *descend*.

It is not improbable that these years of regimental duty were the happiest period of his life. Shortly after his return to the Presidency, from which he had so long been absent, he married; and in the enjoyment of domestic happiness, such as has rarely been surpassed, he soon forgot the injustice that had been done to him. Cheerfully doing his duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call him, respected and beloved by all who had the means of appreciating the simplicity of his manners, the kindness of his heart, the soundness of his intelligence, and the integrity of his conduct, he found that, in exchanging the excitement of a semi-barbarous Court for the tranquillity of cantonment life and the companionship of a gentle and amiable wife, the barter, though not self-sought, had been greatly to his advantage.

Being appointed to the command of a horse-field battery, stationed at Delhi, he left Dum-Dum for the imperial city, where he continued to serve, until, shortly before the

Sikh invasion, he attained that great object of regimental ambition, the command of a troop of horse-artillery. In the Upper Provinces, he had more than once been disquieted by the illness of his young and fondly-loved wife; but the heavy blow, which was to prostrate all his earthly happiness, did not descend upon him until within a few days of that memorable 18th of December, 1845, which saw the British army fling itself upon the Sikh batteries at Mudkhi. He was called away, as he touchingly said, "from the open grave," to be plunged into the excitement of battle. It was at Ferozshuhur that D'Arcey Todd, broken-hearted, with a strong presentiment of his approaching end, declaring that he "only wished to live that the grace of God and the love of Christ might prepare him to leave a world in which there could be no more joy for him," led his troop, a second time, into action, and perished in the unequal conflict: and among the many who fell on that mournful day, there was not a braver soldier or a better man.

On receiving intelligence of Todd's departure from Herat, Macnaghten's first impulse had been to muster all his available resources, and relying greatly on the "big guns," to make an immediate demonstration in the direction of Herat, beating up the rebels on the Helmund, and "crushing Aktur Khan" on our way to the western frontier. He wrote to Rawlinson to prepare for the siege; he wrote to Ross Bell in Scinde to send up all the heavy guns in his part of the country, applying to the commissary at Ferozpore for draft bullocks, if they were not to be obtained more readily; and he wrote to the Supreme Government to send "as large a force as might be available, and as speedily as possible, to Candahar, even if an attack on Herat should not be meditated." He was eager for the opinions of every competent authority regarding the facilities of an immediate movement on Herat. "Is

there any chance," he wrote to Rawlinson, "of our mustering heavy guns and force sufficient to attack the place this year?" "What does Todd say of the best season for operations, and what aid does he hope we might obtain from people in and around Herat?" "What does Sanders think of the means at our command for subduing Herat?" "You may imagine," he wrote, in another letter to the same correspondent, "how anxious I am to hear of Todd's safety, and to learn the particulars of his departure from Herat, and the proximate cause of that important event, as well as his and your, and Sanders' opinion, as to the practicability of operations against Herat this season. I suppose if the force were to move from Candahar by the middle of May, it would be time enough. But will the requisite battering train be then forthcoming? And shall we then have a *quantum suff* of grain and camels?" "The Governor-General," added the Envoy, "will, I fear, if possible, do nothing."

In this conjecture, at least, Macnaghten's sagacity was not at fault. Against an armed interference with the affairs of Herat, Lord Auckland had always steadfastly set his face. It was his belief that it was necessary to establish ourselves firmly in Afghanistan before operating upon Herat; but Macnaghten always declared that there was no possibility of achieving the former object until the latter had been accomplished, and was always clamorous for the reannexation of Herat to the dominions of Shah Soojah. His instructions, however, were imperative. Even after the departure of the Mission, the Governor-General counselled a mild and forbearing course. "I cannot," he wrote to Macnaghten, "apprehend organised invasion from Herat, though there may be a foray on the frontier, which will not have the effect of making the advent of Yar Mahomed popular in Zemindawer. I think it, however, more likely that you will have to deal with

letters and agents than with troops; and you ask me in what manner you are to receive overtures which may be made to you by Yar Mahomed. I would receive them calmly and coldly, but not repulsively. I would show no impatience to renew a Mission to Herat. I would have it to be understood that the stoppage of the allowances was unauthorised, and that the detachment of a brigade to the citadel of Herat was not desired, and would not have been acceded to by the British Government, but that the conduct of the Vizier has given great offence, and that we can regard Herat with no confidence or friendly feeling until there shall have been on the side of that state an entire change of policy. I can only repeat, therefore, what I have said very many times within the last two years: That you must be strong in Afghanistan before you can hope to exercise a wholesome influence upon Herat; and I am glad that you are giving your attention to the condition of the internal government of the country."

But although the supreme authorities at Calcutta would not countenance a movement upon Herat, it was manifest at Candahar that the aggressive designs of Yar Mahomed, who contemplated the seizure of Ghiresk, and the hostile demonstrations of the Douranees in the western districts, rendered active operations on our part a matter of immediate necessity. So Rawlinson wrote officially to the General that it appeared to him "of first-rate importance that the insurrection in Zemindawer should be crushed before the acquisition of any further strength could render its co-operation of essential service to the Wuzeer of Herat in his projected advance." "I also consider," he added, "that the strengthening of our position on the Helmund, and the indication of readiness on our part to meet any such advance, would be the most effectual way of checking the movement, and of

frustrating its object."* An intercepted letter from Aktur Khan, announcing his intention to move from Zemindawer directly upon Candahar, if encouraged by the tribes occupying the intervening country, had been brought in to the Political Agent, and it was obvious, therefore, that no time was to be lost.

So a force was sent out to the Zemindawer country to beat up Aktur Khan's quarters, or to intercept his advance. The political conduct of the expedition was entrusted to Lieutenant Elliot, Rawlinson's assistant; and ably he did his duty. It was not our policy to beat the Douranees in battle. It never could be our policy in that country to shed the blood of the tribes. The submission, not the destruction, of Aktur Khan was now the object to be attained; and, as the chief was believed to muster not more than 1300 followers, it was deemed probable that the advance of our force would determine him, in the diplomatic language of the day, to "come in." Intimations of his willingness to submit to terms met Elliot as he advanced. An interview was arranged between them. In the camp of the Dourance Sirdar, Atta Mahomed, the young English "Political" met Aktur Khan, and received his submission. A conditional pardon was granted to the disaffected chief, some concessions were made, and a dress of honour was conferred upon him. The most important condition on his part was, that he should disband his followers, and as it was believed that he would fulfil his promise in this respect, hope was entertained that the Zemindawer country would be tranquillised without further shedding of blood. But, Rawlinson saw plainly that the advantage which we had gained would be short-lived. "I do not anticipate," he wrote to Macnaghten, "that by the conciliatory treatment recom-

* Major Rawlinson to General Nott, Feb. 18, 1841.—Quoted in Stocqueler's "Life of Sir William Nott."

mended by Lieutenant Elliot, we gain any other advantage than that of temporary tranquillity; and however prudent therefore it may be at present to induce the rebel chief of Zemindawer to abstain from disorders by the hope of obtaining through his forbearance substantial personal benefits, I still think that when the danger of foreign aggression is removed, and efficient means are at our disposal, the rights of His Majesty's government should be asserted in that strong and dignified manner which can alone ensure a due respect being paid to his authority."*

And not the Douranees only, but the Ghilzyes also in Western Afghanistan were, in the spring and summer of 1841, revolting against the authorities of Shah Soojah and his Feringhee supporters. Lieutenant Lynch, an officer of the Bombay army, who had served in Persia with the rank of major, was in political charge of the country about Khelat-i-Ghilzye. The restlessness and disaffection of the tribes he attributed to the fact that the families of some of their chief people, who, after the operations against them in 1839, had fled for safety to the Sikh frontier, had at the instigation of the British Envoy, been seized and cast into captivity. But, whatever may have been the more remote cause, there was in this spring of 1841, a proximate source of irritation in the fact, that the English were rebuilding the fortress of Khelat-i-Ghilzye, which lies between Caubul and Candahar, with the design of posting there a strong garrison to overcome the circumjacent tribes. This movement had been regarded with great jealousy by the Ghilzyes; and the tribes in the immediate neighbourhood had assumed an insolent and defiant attitude. About two miles from Khelat-i-Ghilzye, was a small fort, bristling with armed men. As Lynch was riding past it, some of

* Major Rawlinson to Sir W. H. Macnaghten, March 11, 1841.—[*MS. Records.*]

the people came out, and brandishing their swords defied him to attack them. It was thought that if this insolence were allowed to pass unnoticed, more serious acts of aggression might be anticipated. So the troops at Khelat-i-Ghilzye were summoned to attack the fort. Aided by Captain Sanders of the engineers, Captain Macan, who commanded one of the regiments of Shah Soojah's force, led his Hindostanees against the rebellious stronghold, and captured it after a brave resistance. The chief and many of his followers were slain in the conflict, and the irritation of the Ghilzyes was greater than before.

It was a gallant military exploit, but a great misfortune; and Lynch, whether he had judged rightly or wrongly that the exigencies of the occasion demanded that he should chastise the people who had insulted him, was condemned both at Caubul and Calcutta. The Envoy wrote that he had "foreseen the likelihood of the Ghilzyes resenting the erection of a fort in the heart of their country;" but asked, "Why should we go and knock our heads against mud-forts? Why should we not have waited till the Ghilzyes chose to attack us?" Lord Auckland declared his opinion that Major Lynch's proceedings had been "marked by a vapouring and needless parade, most likely to produce popular excitement." And a little later, Burnes, in a letter full of wise humanity, wrote to Lynch; more in sorrow than in anger, saying, "I am one of those altogether opposed to any further fighting in this country, and I consider that we shall never settle Afghanistan at the point of the bayonet. . . . As regards the Ghilzyes, indeed, immense allowance ought to be made for them; they were till within three generations the Kings of Afghanistan, and carried their victorious arms to the capital of Persia. It is expecting too much, therefore, to hope for their being at once peaceful subjects; and as they exhibited so much indisposition to the King's Government,

it was, I think, right to build a fort at Khelat-i-Ghilzye, and thus bridle them, thereby enabling us, in the heart of the Ghilzye country, to protect those who were disposed to join us, and gradually undermine our enemies. . . . Had I been by, I would have said, 'Build Khelat-i-Ghilzye, and pardon all kinds of insolence, for those who win may laugh.'"

Major Lynch was removed from office. When all the circumstances of the case came to be known, the Envoy took a more favourable view of his conduct. But, whether it were right or wrong in itself, its results were unfortunate. They could not be otherwise. It was the inevitable consequence of such proceedings that the bitterness and the turbulence of the Ghilzyes should wax greater than before, and that soon the aspect of affairs in the neighbourhood of Khelat-i-Ghilzye should render more dragooning necessary for the maintenance of the authority of the Shah. It was expected that the whole country would rise up against Macan's detachment; so reinforcements were urgently called for from Candahar. The hot weather had by this time set in, and Nott was unwilling to expose his troops to the burning sun. But the political necessity was said to be great; Macan was in his danger; and no troops could be spared from Caubul.

So Colonel Wymer, a good and successful officer, with 400 men of his own regiment (the 38th Sepoys), four horse-artillery guns, and a party of Christie's horse, took the field in the month of May. The Ghilzyes, eager for the conflict, moved down from Khelat-i-Ghilzye to meet our advancing troops; and, on the 19th, gave them battle. Night was beginning to fall when they came up with Wymer's camp at Assiai-Ilmee. A Ghilzye chief of high estate, named Gool Mahomed, known as the "Gooroo," who had threatened Keane's army nearly two years before, was at the head of the tribes. They came on with unwavering gallantry, but were met

with a heavy fire from Hawkins's guns, which, served with equal rapidity and precision, committed mighty havoc in their ranks. Upon this, the Ghilzyes, resolutely intending to attack simultaneously both flanks and the centre of Wymer's force, divided themselves into three columns; and, coolly and deliberately, they came down sword in hand to the charge. Wymer had an extensive convoy to protect. His movements, therefore, were crippled; and he was compelled to stand on his defence. But the destroying grape from the guns, and the steady musketry fire of the Sepoys, sent back the Ghilzye swordsmen again and again reeling under the iron shower. For five busy hours continued that mortal struggle; and then the Ghilzyes gave way. They had greatly outnumbered our party, and they left many dead on the field. All night long, too, the moving lights announced that many more, both of killed and wounded, were carried off to their camp.

Whilst in this manner efforts were being made to tranquillise the Ghilzyes, the proceedings of Aktur Khan and the Douranees were again exciting the apprehensions of the Envoy. In spite of all our conciliatory efforts, they had not been quieted. The chief, it has been seen, had outwardly tendered his allegiance to the King, and had received a dress of honour, with an assurance from our political officers that the past would be forgotten. The revenue officers, whom the Douranees detested, had been removed. The old earless minister, Moollah Shikore, had been replaced by Oosman Khan, a younger, an abler, and a more honest man; and Macnaghten was contemplating other fiscal reforms than those which he had already sanctioned, and hoping to restore the tribes to their allegiance. But their disaffection was too deeply rooted to be operated upon by such measures. The entire system of government was offensive to them. The

presence of the British was a perennial source of irritation. What they regarded as their legitimate influence had been usurped by the Feringhees; and they were soon ready again to appear in the field, and cross their sabres with the foreign bayonets.

It was obvious, indeed, as the month of May wore to an end, that, unable to obtain all that he wanted for himself, Aktur Khan was still our bitter and implacable foe. Instead of disbanding his followers, he was collecting them for another struggle. Irritated by this, Macnaghten wrote to Rawlinson (May 31) as he had before written in the case of Dost Mahomed, that if he could seize Aktur Khan, he would recommend his execution. "I think," he said, "you should strain every nerve to lay hold of that indomitable Moofsid, Aktur Khan, and that if you can seize him, the Prince should be recommended to execute him. . . . I further think that a reward of 10,000 rupees should be offered for the apprehension of Aktur Khan." But it was still difficult to persuade the Envoy that the country was in an unsettled state. The Ghilzyes and the Douranees were both in arms against the authority of the Shah and his supporters. The whole country of Western Afghanistan was in a fearful state of unrest. Rawlinson, at Candahar, who saw clearly at this time the frail tenure by which we held our position in Afghanistan, was continually warning the Envoy of the dangers which loomed so largely before him. But Macnaghten only censured his correspondent for his "unwarrantably gloomy views," and denounced everything that was said about the unsettled state of the country as an "idle statement." How unwilling he was to believe that the clouds were gathering over his head, may be gleaned from his correspondence with Rawlinson at this time. On the 13th of June he wrote a long letter, in which he thus emphatically declared his opinions:

Your letter of the 7th arrived this morning. I don't like reverting to unpleasant discussions, but you know well that I have been frank with you from the beginning, and that I have invariably told you of what I thought I had reason to complain. This may be confined to one topic—your taking an unwarrantably gloomy view of our position, and entertaining and disseminating rumours favourable to that view. We have enough of difficulties and enough of croakers without adding to the number needlessly. I have just seen a letter from Mr. Dallas to Captain Johnson, in which he says the state of the country is becoming worse and worse every day. These idle statements may cause much mischief, and, often repeated as they are, they neutralise my protestations to the contrary. I know them to be utterly false as regards this part of the country, and I have no reason to believe them to be true as regards your portion of the kingdom, merely because the Tokhees are ndulging in their accustomed habits of rebellion, or because Aktur Khan has a pack of ragamuffins at his heels. As I have said before, there is nothing in these matters which might not have been foreseen, or which ought to cause us the slightest uneasiness. We will take such precautions as shall prevent the Ghilzyes from annoying us; and this is all that is requisite for the present. We may safely leave the rest to time. As to the documents protesting against the appointment of Sumud, I look upon them as pure fudge. Send for the Janbaz. Let them make a forced march by night, and come in the rear of Aktur. Seize the villain, and hang him as high as Haman, and you will probably have no more disturbances. The Janbaz may remain out while the collections are going on, if necessary. I have already explained to you that I never intended offering a reward for Aktur's head, nor should I approve of encouraging the man who has a blood-feud with him to put him out of the way. This, besides being objectionable, would be superfluous, because his enemy must know that we could not be otherwise than gratified at the removal of so atrocious a traitor. With regard to the Tymunees, all I meant was, that they should be encouraged to seize Aktur if he attempted to take refuge in their territory, and I thought that a large pecuniary reward would be necessary to overcome their natural scruples to such a proceeding.*

But these Dourance children were now again to be corrected. Though "all was content and tranquillity

* *MS. Correspondence.*

from Mookoor to the Khybur," it was necessary that our troops should be continually in the field. And it was not always child's play in which they were summoned to engage. Aktur Khan was, at the end of June, still in arms before Ghiresk, with a body of three thousand men, and it was necessary to strike a blow at the rebel chief. Macnaghten saw the necessity of "tolerating his audacity no longer," and although he, at first thought that a "judicious use of the Janbaz would extirpate the villain," he consented to send out a regular force against the rebel chief to "hunt him to the world's end."

So Woodburn, a fine dashing officer, who commanded one of the Shah's regiments, was sent out against him, with his own corps (the 5th Infantry), two detachments of Janbaz, or Afghan Horse, under Hart and Golding, and some guns of the Shah's Horse Artillery, under Cooper. On the 3rd of July he found the enemy posted on the other side of the Helmund river; mustering, it was said afterwards, six thousand men, in six divisions, with a Moollah, or priest at the head of each, and with each a standard, bearing the inscription, "we have been trusting in God; may he guide and guard us!" * Woodburn tried the fords, but they were impassable. Hart, however, had passed them at another point, but, finding himself unsupported, he returned. This was in early morning. Four hours after noon the enemy struck their camp, and soon afterwards commenced the passage of the river. Woodburn made his arrangements for their reception. The Douranees made a spirited attack, but Woodburn's infantry, well supported by Cooper's guns, met them with too prompt and sure a fire to encourage them to greater boldness. The Janbaz, already graduating in treachery and cowardice, covered themselves with that peculiar kind

* Captain Woodburn to General Nott, July 6, 1841.—Stocqueler's "Life of Sir William Nott."

of glory which clung to them to the end of the war. It was a busy night. The enemy far outnumbered Woodburn; but the steady gallantry of his gunners and his footmen achieved the success they deserved. Before daybreak the enemy had withdrawn. It would have been a great thing to have followed up and dispersed the rebels, but with all the country against him, and a body of horse at his back on which no reliance could be placed, it would have been madness to make the attempt. So Woodburn, having written for reinforcements, pushed on to Ghiresk, whence he wrote that he believed the rebellion was far more extensive than was supposed, and that the population of Candahar were quite as disaffected as the rebels on the banks of the Helmund.

The month of August, however, found the Envoy still cheerful and sanguine. The convulsions of the Douranees and the spasms of the Ghilzyes were regarded by him as the accompaniments only of those infantine fevers which were inseparable from the existence of the tribes. In vain Rawlinson, with steady eye watching those symptoms, and probing with deep sagacity the causes of the mortal ailments out of which arose all those fierce throes of anguish, protested that throughout Western Afghanistan there was a strong national feeling against us; and that difficulties and dangers were coiling their serpent folds around us with irresistible force. Macnaghten still asked what we had to fear, and thus, on the 2nd of August, addressed his less sanguine colleague:

I am not going to read you a lecture, first, because when you ndited your letter of the 28th ult. you pleaded guilty to the influence of bile; and secondly, because at the present writing I must own the same impeachment; but I must pen a few remarks, in the hope of inducing you to regard matters a little more "*couleur de rose.*" You say, "The state of the country causes me many an anxious thought—we may thresh the Douranees over and over

again, but this rather aggravates than obviates the difficulty of overcoming the national feeling against us—in fact, our tenure is positively that of military possession, and the French in Algiers, and the Russians in Circassia, afford us an example on a small scale of the difficulty of our position." Now upon what do you found your assertion that there is a national feeling against us, such as that against the French in Algiers or the Russians in Circassia? Solely, so far as I know, because the turbulent Douranees have risen in rebellion. From Mookoor to the Khybur Pass all is content and tranquillity, and wherever we Europeans go we are received with respect, and attention, and welcome. But the insurrection of the Douranees is no new occurrence. The history of the rule of the Barukzye Sirdars would show that they were engaged in one continuous struggle with their turbulent brethren. If they were able to reduce them to subjection with their contemptible means, what should we have to fear from them? We have given them something to lose which they had not before, and you may rely upon it that they will be quiet enough as soon as they are satisfied (which they ought to be pretty well by this time) of the futility of opposition, provided some means are adopted of preventing Yar Mahomed from carrying on his intrigues. Then, the Ghilzyes have been in arms. True. But it would have been unreasonable to suppose that they should surrender their independance without a struggle, and we have now put the bit in their mouths. I do not concur with you as to the difficulty of our position. On the contrary, I think our prospects are most cheering, and with the materials we have there ought to be little or no difficulty in the management of the country.

It is true the population is exclusively Mahomedan, but it is split into rival sects; and we all know that of all antipathies the sectarian is the most virulent. We have Hazaras, Ghilzyes, Douranees, and Kuzzilbashes, all at daggers drawn with each other, and in every family there are rivals and enemies. Some faults of management must necessarily be committed on the first assumption of the administration of a new country, and the Douranee outbreak may be partially attributed to such faults; but what, after all, do such outbreaks signify? The modern history of India teems with such instances. There is hardly a district in which some desperate adventurer has not appeared at some time or other, and drawn the entire population after him. The whole province of Bareilly, in 1817, rose against us on a religious war-cry. The whole province of Cuttack, shortly afterwards, followed the standard of the rebel

Jugbeneda, and we had infinite trouble in quelling the insurrection. Instances of this kind might be infinitely multiplied, and yet we find the effects of such outbreaks are very evanescent. The people of this country are very credulous. They believe any story invented to our prejudice; but they will very soon learn that we are not the cannibals we are painted. Mr. Gorman's fate was doubtless very melancholy; but are there no assassinations in other countries? I read in the *Bombay Times* only this morning an account of a cavalry officer being shot at in the open day in one of our villages. You say, "The infatuated towns-people are even beginning now to show their teeth; there have been three cases to-day of stones thrown from the tops of the houses on Sepoys' heads walking along the streets." Certainly our troops can be no great favourites in a town where they have turned out half the inhabitants for their own accommodation; but I will venture to say there is not a county town in England where soldiers are quartered in which similar excesses have not happened. European and Native soldiers have traversed the town of Candahar unarmed; and though it is to be apprehended that their conduct has been occasionally very aggravating, only two assaults have been committed upon them. When I went to Hyderabad in 1810, and for many years after, no European could venture to show himself in the city, such was the state of feeling against us. Look upon this picture and on that. Now I believe the lieges of Hyderabad look upon us as very innocent Kaffirs.

You are quite right, I think in directing Pattinson to accept the submission of all the rebels, save Aktur, who may be desirous of coming in. They should be required to furnish security for appearance sake. But these people are perfect children, and should be treated as such. If we put one naughty boy in the corner, the rest will be terrified. We have taken their plaything, power, out of the hands of the Douranee chiefs, and they are pouting a good deal in consequence. They did not know how to use it. In their hands it was useless and even hurtful to their master, and we were obliged to transfer it to scholars of our own. They instigate the Moollahs, and the Moollahs preach to the people; but this will be very temporary. The evil of it we must have borne with, or abandoned all hope of forming a national army.*

The Douranee children, however, required more chastisement. No man could have done more than Wood-

* *MS. Correspondence.*

burn did with his means; but those means were insufficient. It was the custom then, both against the Ghilzyes and the Dourances, to send out detachments sufficiently large to accomplish, with the aid of their guns, small victories over the enemy, and so to increase the bitterness of their hostility, without breaking their strength. Aktur Khan was still in arms. Banded with him was Akrum Khan, another Douranee chief, inspired with like bitter hatred of the restored monarch and his Feringhee allies. A force under Captain Griffin, who had been sent to reinforce Woodburn at Ghiresk, now went out against them. It was strong in the mounted branch. Eight hundred sabres, three hundred and fifty bayonets, and four six-pounder guns, followed Griffin into the field of Zemindawer. On the 17th of August he came up with the insurgents. It was a moment of some anxiety. The *Janbaz* had not by their conduct under Woodburn won the confidence of the British officers. Nott always mistrusted them, and the feeling was, not unreasonably, shared by others.* But here they were associated with the men of the King's regular cavalry, and they may have felt the danger of defection. Be the cause what it may, they did not shrink from the encounter. The enemy were strongly posted in a succession of walled

* Nott's disparagement of the Janbaz so irritated Macnaghten, and displeased Lord Auckland, that his removal from Candahar was contemplated. The following extracts from Macnaghten's correspondence show what was thought on the subject:—"*September* 2.—Between you and me, Lord A. is much displeased with General Nott for his light and indiscriminate censure and disparagement of the Janbaz; and I think his displeasure will be increased when he peruses the General's subsequent and most uncandid despatch, in which he omitted all notice of the exemplary conduct of the Janbaz at Secunderabad." "*September* 5.—You are not likely to have Nott with you much longer. His conduct in respect to the Janbaz has elicited the severest displeasure of government, by whom he has been declared disqualified for his present important command."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

gardens and small forts, from which they opened a heavy matchlock fire upon our advancing troops; but the fire of our guns and musketry drove them from their inclosures, and then the cavalry, headed by the young Prince Sufder Jung, who had something more than the common energy of the royal race, charged with terrific effect, and utterly broke the discomfited mass of Douranees. The victory was a great one. Aktur Khan fled. The Douranees were disheartened; and for a time they sunk into the repose of feebleness and exhaustion.

The Ghilzyes, too, had received another check. Colonel Chambers, early in August, had been sent out against them, with a party of his own regiment, (the 5th Light Cavalry), the 16th and 43rd Sepoy Regiments, and some details of Irregular Horse. He came up with the enemy on the morning of the 5th; but before he could bring the main body of his troops into action, a party of his cavalry had fallen upon them and scattered them in disastrous flight. There was nothing left for them after this but submission; and soon the chief instigator of the movement had "come in" to our camp.

Under the influence of these victories, Macnaghten's confidence rose higher and higher. The Douranees were broken, and the Ghilzyes had submitted "almost without a blow." Aktur Khan had fled, and the "Gooroo" had surrendered. Now, indeed, the Envoy thought that he might report "all quiet from Dan to Beersheba." If anything caused him a moment's inquietude, it was the thought that Akbar Khan, the favourite son of Dost Mahomed, was still abroad, hovering about Khooloom. With something that now seems like a strange presentiment, he wrote that "the fellow would be after some mischief, should the opportunity present itself." It was on the 20th of August that, writing to Mr. Robertson, he thus expressed himself:

The victory of the Helmund was very complete. I believe the enemy on that occasion was as numerous a body as could ever be congregated in this country, consisting of some 4000 or 5000 men. The Douranees want one more threshing, and then they would be quite satisfied of the futility of opposing us; but my last letter from Rawlinson gave me no hope that they would collect again. The whole of the Ghilzye tribes have submitted almost without a blow; for the gallant little affair in which the 5th Cavalry redeemed the honour of that branch of the service, could hardly be dignified with the name of a fight. Those who knew this country when it was ruled by Barukzyes, are amazed at the metamorphosis it has undergone, and with so little bloodshed. The former rulers were eternally fighting with their subjects from one year's end to another. Now we cannot move a *naick* and four without having all the newspapers setting up a yell about the unpopularity of the Shah. The Shah is unpopular with the Douranee Khans, and we have made him so by supplanting them, and taking the military power which they were incompetent to use from their hands into our own. With all other classes his Majesty is decidedly, but deservedly, popular, and the Khans are too contemptible to be cared about.

We have had very unpleasant intelligence from Bokhara, it being reported that Colonel Stoddart is again in disgrace and confinement; and I am the more alarmed about this, from thinking it probable that Arthur Conolly will return from Kokund *viâ* Bokhara. But the intelligence requires confirmation. Mahomed Akbar, the Dost's favourite son, is still at Khooloom, and has rejected my overture to come in. The fellow will be after some mischief, should the opportunity present itself. . . . You will see that Shah Soojah has most handsomely given back Cutchee and Moostung to the young Khan of Khelat. His Majesty's revenue is little more than fifteen lakhs per annum—hardly enough for the maintenance of his personal state—and yet the government below are perpetually writing to me that this charge and that charge is to be defrayed out of his "Majesty's resources!" God help the poor man and his resources!! The country is perfectly quiet from Dan to Beersheba.*

But, although the Envoy thus on the 20th of August, wrote to his private friends in the provinces of India that all was quiet from Dan to Beersheba, he was at this very time making arrangements for the despatch from Candahar of a large force to the Tereen and Dehrawut country on the

* *MS. Correspondence.*

north-western frontier of Afghanistan. "The northern districts," he wrote to General Elphinstone on the 21st of August, "have been in a state of rebellion, and the chiefs of those districts (of whom one Akrum Khan is the head) have refused to wait upon His Majesty's representative; have been in constant correspondence with the rebel Aktur Khan, and have assembled a considerable number of armed followers, with a view to defy His Majesty's authority. The arrival of the 16th and 43rd regiments of Native Infantry will admit of a force being detached from that garrison; and I am officially made acquainted with the opinion of the political agent at Candahar to the effect that it is necessary to send an expedition into the disturbed districts, with a view either to expel the offending chiefs or to enforce their submission."

So, orders were sent to Candahar for the equipment of another force for field-service, with instructions to complete the necessary work in the least possible space of time, in order that three regiments of Native Infantry, which were under orders to leave the serene and prosperous country, might turn their faces towards India at the beginning of November. By the end of the first week of September the force was ready to commence its march—a difficult, toilsome and hazardous march into an unknown country. Two regiments of the Company's Bengal Infantry (the 2nd and 38th), a regiment of the Shah's cavalry, two Horse-Artillery guns of the same service, a company of European Artillery with two 18-pounder guns, and a detachment of Sappers, composed the force. It was in good condition; well equipped at all points; and it started with a month's supplies.

The force was commanded by Colonel Wymer. Nott saw it depart with mortification and regret which he did not desire to conceal. Some time before he had received instructions from head-quarters not to leave Candahar,

where his presence was conceived to be expedient; and he still believed that those instructions were in force. Eager, therefore, as he was, to place himself at the head of his men, he deemed it to be his duty, as a soldier, to remain in garrison while he delegated the command to another. But while to the officer he had selected to take the envied post he issued comprehensive instructions for his guidance in the field, he, at the same time, wrote to the officer commanding in Afghanistan, respectfully expressing his "deep regret that so large a portion of the force under his orders should be despatched on what might prove to be a difficult service, without his being permitted to assume the command." The answer returned to this last letter entirely removed all restrictions on Nott's movements; so the general at once prepared himself to take command of the force.

In the meanwhile the troops had marched. The political conduct of the expedition had been entrusted to Lieutenant Elliot, who had been summoned for this purpose from Khelat-i-Ghilzye, where he had been placed on the removal of Lynch. Every effort had been made to obtain reliable information relative to the country which they were about to traverse; but the want of local knowledge was severely felt, and the difficulties of the march, encumbered as was the force with heavy guns, was greater than had been anticipated. Nott joined the force on the 23rd of September; and they pushed on into the Dehrawut country. But it was soon apparent that so formidable a display of force would achieve without bloodshed the objects of the expedition. Early in the month of October many of the principal Douranee chiefs were in Nott's camp. They had never before seen our regular troops, which now, paraded and exercised before them, made a strong impression on their minds. They gazed at and handled our heavy guns with wonder-

ing apprehension, and confessed that they had no desire to test their quality. It was said throughout the war that our guns were the best "politicals," but Elliot's diplomacy was not unsuccessfully exerted, and the chiefs professed their willingness to proceed to Caubul and make submission to the Shah.

But there was one who refused to submit. The indomitable spirit of Akrum Khan was proof against all promises and all threats. He did not come into Nott's camp; but held aloof, still eager, it was said, to give us battle. It was our policy to seize the rebel chief; and this was now to be done. One of his own countrymen undertook to betray him. It was suspected that the man had no real intention to lead us to the lair of the hostile Douranee; but, after the manner of his nation, to obtain money from us and then to lead our troops astray. But Elliot grasped the proposal, with a tenacity of purpose which baffled all fraud and defeated all evasion. He went to the general, and obtained his permission to send a regiment of Janbaz, under John Conolly, to beat up the quarters of Akrum Khan. There was little expectation in camp that the forces would be successful. But Conolly did his work well. It is said that the feet of the guide were tied under his horse's belly to prevent his escape. A rapid march brought them to a small fort, where Akrum Khan was preparing to betake himself to the hills. A few hours' delay would have been fatal to the success of the expedition. But now its great object was attained. The rebel Douranee was surprised, seized, and carried back, a prisoner, to Nott's camp. The expedition had scarcely occupied thirty-six hours.

The rest is soon told. The unfortunate chief was carried a doomed captive to Candahar. Macnaghten, whose letters written at this time show how all his finer feelings had been blunted by the rude work in which

he was engaged, had persuaded the King that it was necessary to make a terrible example of some of the disturbers of the public peace. Prince Timour was then the governor of Candahar. He had recently been sent to the western capital to take the place of his brother Futteh Jung, whose detestable character had rendered his removal necessary; and the change was one greatly for the better. Timour was a man of respectable reputation; mild, indolent, and compliant. He governed according to the behests of his English supporters, and had little will of his own. He now directed or authorised, under instructions from Caubul, the execution of the Douranee prisoner; and so Akrum Khan was blown from a gun.

Before the end of October, Nott had returned to Candahar with the greater part of the force; and Lieutenant Crawford had been despatched to Caubul with the Douranee chiefs who had tendered their submission. There was now really a prospect of tranquillity in Western Afghanistan; for both the Ghilzye and the Dourance confederacy had been crushed; and the facility with which we had moved our regular troops and our heavy guns into the most difficult parts of the country had demonstrated to the turbulent tribes the difficulty of escaping the vengeance of the Feringhees, and had produced a good moral effect among people who had before only known us from report.

CHAPTER V.

[September—October: 1841.]

Aspect of Affairs at Caubul—The King—The Envoy—Burnes—Elphinstone—The English at Caubul—Expenses of the War—Retrenchment of the Subsidies—Risings of the Ghilzyes—Sale's Brigade—Gatherings in the Kohistan—Sale's Arrival at Gundamuck—The 1st of November.

TAKING advantage of the lull that followed the defeat of the Douranees and the Ghilzyes in Western Afghanistan, let us dwell for a little space on the general condition of affairs at the capital, in this month of September.

The King was in the Balla Hissar. Discontented and unhappy, he complained that he had no real authority; that the English gentlemen were managing the affairs of his kingdom; and that he himself was a mere pageant and a show. He had watched with satisfaction the growth of the difficulties which were besetting the path of his allies, and was not without a hope that their further development would be attended by our withdrawal from so troubled a sphere. It was plain to him that, although deference was outwardly shown to his opinions, and a pretence of consulting his wishes was made by his British advisers, they really held all the power in their hands; and he said, complainingly, to one of them,* for whom he entertained no little personal affection, that he "did not understand his position." The

* Captain Macgregor.—[*See Macgregor's Report on the Causes of the Caubul Outbreak.*]

appointment of the new minister, Oosman Khan, in the place of his old and tried servant, Moollah Shikore, had been extremely distasteful to him; and it chafed him to think that a functionary so appointed must necessarily be less eager to fulfil his wishes than those of his European allies. His health, too, was failing at this time; he was nervous and irritable, and Macnaghten thinking that he saw symptoms of approaching dissolution, contemplated the expediency of bringing Prince Timour from Candahar to the capital. "His Majesty," he wrote to Rawlinson, on the 21st of September, "is ill of a fever, which has been hanging about him for some time, and at his time of life, the issue, to say the least of it, is very doubtful. It seems to be in the highest degree desirable that Shahzadah Timour should be here in the event of a fatal termination of His Majesty's illness. The Nizamoodowlah and I have had a serious conversation this morning on the subject. He thinks, and I am disposed to agree with him, that it might be well if the Shahzadah were to address an *areeza* to His Majesty, stating how much grieved he is to hear of His Majesty's illness, the intelligence of which has filled him with so much uneasiness as to incapacitate him for the proper performance of the duties of government, and expressing an earnest desire to kiss the feet of His Majesty, and thereby give relief to his mind." But the old man rallied, and Macnaghten rejoiced. At such a time, a succession would have been embarrassing and inopportune, for the Envoy was preparing to shake the dust of Afghanistan from his feet for ever.

He was about to receive the reward of a life of successful and appreciated service, and to end his official days in comparative quiet and repose. He was about to escape out of the cares and inquietudes—the difficulties and dangers—the incessant harassing turmoil and

excitement of a life of responsibility among a turbulent and discontented people, and to commence a new career of useful and honoured public service, upon a less stormy and tumultuous scene. He had been appointed Governor of Bombay. The same recognition of approved zeal and capacity which had been extended to Malcolm and Elphinstone, had now come to testify the estimation in which Macnaghten's services were held by his employers. It was a high and flattering mark of confidence, and it was doubly welcome after all the doubts and misgivings engendered in his mind by the implied censures of his immediate superior. The value of the gift, too, was enhanced by the seasonableness of the time at which it was received. Macnaghten looked around him, and saw that "everything was quiet from Dan to Beersheba;" and he rejoiced in the thought that he was about to quit Afghanistan for ever, and to carry with him no burden of anxiety and fear.

Burnes was also at Caubul. He had been there ever since the restoration of the Shah, in a strange unrecognised position, of which it is difficult to give any intelligible account. He used to say, that he was in the "most nondescript of situations." It appears to have been his mission in Afghanistan to draw a large salary every month, and to give advice that was never taken. This might have satisfied many men. It did not satisfy Burnes. He said that he wanted responsibility; and under Macnaghten he had none. He had no precise duties of any kind; but he watched all that was going on in Afghanistan with a penetrating eye and an understanding brain, and he wrote, in the shape of letters to Macnaghten, long and elaborate papers on the state and prospects of Afghanistan, which his official chief dismissed with a few pencil-notes for the most part of contemptuous dissent. Burnes saw clearly that everything was going

wrong. He probed, deeply and searchingly, the great wound of national discontent—a mighty sore that was ever running—and he felt in his inmost soul that the death-throes of such a system could not be very remote. But better days were now beginning to dawn upon him. He had been waiting for Macnaghten's office, and now, at last, it seemed to be within his reach. A few weeks, and he would be supreme at Caubul; and the great object of his ambition gained.

The command of the troops was in the hands of General Elphinstone—an old officer of the Queen's service, of good repute, gentlemanly manners, and aristocratic connections. He had succeeded Sir Willoughby Cotton in the early part of the year. But it must have been a wonder to him, as it was to all who knew him, what business he had in such a place. He had no Indian experience of any kind, and he was pressed down by physical infirmities. When Sir Willoughby Cotton intimated his desire, on the plea of ill health, to be relieved from the command of the troops in Afghanistan, there was an officer already in the country to whom their charge might have been safely delegated. But he was not in favour either at the Mission or at the Calcutta Government House. Sir Jasper Nicolls would have placed Nott in command; but there were obstacles to his appointment, at which I have already hinted; and it was deemed expedient to send to Caubul a man of a more ductile nature, with as few opinions of his own as might be, to clash with those of the political chief. So Lord Auckland despatched General Elphinstone to Afghanistan—not in ignorance of his disqualifications, for they were pointed out to him by others—but in spite of a clear perception of them. Whether those who sent the brave old gentleman to India with all his infirmities thick upon him, recommended him for this especial

field of service, or whether any notions of routine and the obligations of the roster pressed themselves upon Lord Auckland with irresistible force, I cannot confidently declare; but so inexplicable by any reference to intelligible human motives and actions is an appointment of this kind, that it is impossible not to recognise in such a dispensation a mightier agency than that of man, or to reject the belief that, when Elphinstone went to Caubul, the curse which sate upon our unholy policy was working onward for our overthrow.

Next in rank to General Elphinstone were Sir Robert Sale and Brigadier Shelton—both officers of the Queen's service, but soldiers of long Indian experience. Each had served with his regiment in the Burmese war; and each had acquired a reputation for the highest personal courage. Sale's regiment was the 13th Light Infantry. Shelton's was the 44th.* Both of these regiments were now at Caubul. But the 13th was about to return to India, and soon afterwards to great Britain. It had seen many years of Indian service, and had been in Afghanistan since Keane's army first entered the country. The 44th had come up early in the year, and had done some service in the Naziain valley, near Jellalabad, on the way.

The command of the Shah's troops was vested in Brigadier Anquetil, a native of one of those lovely islands in the Channel which have sent forth so many brave men to fight our battles by sea and land. He was esteemed a good soldier; and I believe that Macnaghten found him a more

* Shelton had come up from India with the 44th, through the Punjab. His brigade was employed against the refractory tribes of the Sunghoo-Khail in the month of February, and reduced them to a fitting state of subjection; but not without the loss of two valuable officers. Lieutenant Pigou, of the Engineers, was blown to pieces, whilst endeavouring to force in, with powder, the gates of a fort; and Captain Douglas, Assistant-Adjutant-General, was shot dead by the side of the Brigadier.

pliant colleague than the "alarmist" whom he had supplanted. The controversies between Brigadier Roberts and the Envoy had ended in the departure of the former. His advice had been resented; his warnings had been scouted. His clear insight into the dangers which were beneath our feet had been regarded as idle and imbecile fear; and the unwelcome declarations of his honest convictions as little short of rank mutiny. He had done his duty; he had spoken the truth; and he had paid the inevitable penalty of his unwillingness to make an easy and a prosperous present at the cost of a tumultuous and disastrous future. He had returned in disgrace to the British provinces; but he had left his predictions behind him, and he knew that, sooner or later, History would do him justice.

The main body of the British troops were in the new cantonments. These works had been erected in the course of 1840. They were situated on a piece of low ground open to the Kohistan road. They were extensive and ill defended. They were nearly a mile in extent, and were surrounded by ramparts so little formidable that they might be ridden over.* Near the cantonments was the Mission compound, occupying an extensive space, and surrounded by a number of houses and buildings belonging to the officers and retainers of the Mission. There was here, also, a weak attempt at defence; but the walls were beyond measure contemptible; and the whole expanse of building, the entrenched camp and Mission compound together, were so planted, as to be swept on every side by hills, and forts, and villages, and whatever else in such a country could bristle with armed men. No such works were ever known—so wretched in themselves, and so doubly wretched by position. If the object of those who

* A small pony, says Lieutenant Rattray, was backed by an officer to scramble down the ditch and over the wall.

constructed them had been to place our troops at the mercy of an enemy, they could not have been devised more cunningly in furtherance of such an end. They were commanded on every side; and so surrounded with villages, forts, gardens, and other cover for an enemy, that our troops could neither enter nor leave the camp without exposing themselves to a raking fire from some one of these points of attack. And to crown the calamity of the whole, the Commissariat supplies, on which our army depended for its subsistence, were stored in a small fort, not within, but beyond, the cantonments. The communication between the two places was commanded by an empty fort, and by a walled garden, inviting the occupation of an enemy. Human folly seemed to have reached its height in the construction of these works. There stood those great, indefensible cantonments, overawed on every side, a monument of the madness which Providence, for its own ends, had permitted to cloud and bewilder the intelligence of the "greatest military nation of the world." There it stood, a humiliating spectacle; but except by new-comers, who stood in amazement before the great folly, little account was taken of it. Men's eyes had become accustomed to the blot.

And whose was this stupendous error? Are we to assign its origin to the professional incapacity of the engineer officers attached to the force; to the ignorance and carelessness of the officers commanding it; or to the wilfulness of the Envoy? Not to the engineers—Durand, who had first held the post, had urged upon the Envoy the necessity of constructing barracks and posting our troops in the Balla Hissar; and Macnaghten, yielding to these solicitations, had overcome the reluctance of the Shah—but the barracks had been afterwards given up to the accommodation of the old king's harem; and from that time, though Sturt who succeeded Durand, insisted, with equal

urgency on the expediency of locating the troops in the Balla Hissar, and strengthening its defences, all hope of securing a strong military position at Caubul was gone. The sheep-folds on the plain were built. When Brigadier Roberts, in the spring of 1840, saw that the work had commenced, and what it was proposed to do, he remonstrated against the plan; and was told that it had been approved by Sir Willoughby Cotton. The Brigadier had been connected with the Building Department in the upper provinces of India, and freighted his remonstrances, therefore, with much professional experience, bearing upon the sanatory as well as upon the defensive aspects of the question; but, although he believed at first that he had made some impression on the Envoy, his protests were disregarded. And so the cantonments had sprung up, such as we have described them; and there, in that late autumn of 1841, they stood, bare and defenceless, as sheep-pens, whilst the wolves were howling around them.*

The English had by this time begun to settle themselves down in Caubul. Indeed, from the very commencement, they had done their best, as they ever do, to accommodate themselves to new localities and new circumstances, and had transplanted their habits, and, I fear it must be added, their vices, with great address, to the capital of the Dourance Empire. It was plain that they were making themselves at home in the chief city of the Afghans. There was no sign of an intended departure. They were building and furnishing houses for themselves —laying out gardens—surrounding themselves with the comforts and luxuries of European life. Some had sent for their wives and children. Lady Macnaghten, Lady Sale, and other English women, were domesticated in

* For Brigadier Roberts' Correspondence on the subject of the Cantonment Barracks, see Appendix.

comfortable houses within the limits of the great folly we had erected on the plain. The English, indeed, had begun to find the place not wholly unendurable. The fine climate braced and exhilarated them. There was no lack of amusement. They rode races; they played at cricket. They got up dramatic entertainments. They went out fishing; they went out shooting. When winter fell upon them, and the heavy frosts covered the lakes with ice, to the infinite astonishment of the Afghans they skimmed over the smooth surface on their skates. There is no want of manliness among the Afghans; but the manliness of the Feringhee strangers quite put them to shame. They did not like us the less for that. The athletic amusements of our people only raised their admiration. But there was something else which filled them with intensest hate.*

I am not writing an apology. There are truths which must be spoken. The temptations which are most difficult to withstand, were not withstood by our English officers. The attractions of the women of Caubul they did not know how to resist. The Afghans are very jealous of the honour of their women; and there were things done in Caubul which covered them with shame and roused them to revenge. The inmate of the Mahomedan Zenana was not unwilling to visit the quarters of the Christian stranger. For two long years, now, had this shame been burning itself into the hearts of the Caubulees; and there were some men of note and influence among them who knew themselves to be thus wronged. Complaints were made; but they were made in vain. The scandal was open, undisguised, notorious. Redress was not to be obtained. The evil was not in course of suppression. It

* For a pleasant descriptive sketch of the amusements of the English at Caubul, see Mr. Gleig's account of the *Operations of Sale's Brigade in Afghanistan.*

went on till it became intolerable; and the injured then began to see that the only remedy was in their own hands. It is enough to state broadly this painful fact. There are many who can fill in with vivid personality all the melancholy details of this chapter of human weakness, and supply a catalogue of the wrongs which were soon to be so fearfully redressed.

Such, dimly traced in its social aspects, was the general condition of things at Caubul in this month of September, 1841. Politically—such was Macnaghten's conviction—everything was quiet from Dan to Beersheba. The noses of the Dourance Khans had, he said, "been brought to the grindstone;" and the Gooroo and other Ghilzye chiefs were in his safe keeping at Caubul, seemingly contented with their lot. As the month advanced the Envoy continued to write that our prospects were "brightening in every direction," that everything was "*couleur de rose.*" It is true that Eldred Pottinger, who after a brief visit to the British provinces had returned to Afghanistan, was not sending in very favourable reports from the Kohistan and the Nijrow country, which were now his new sphere of action; but of these troubles Macnaghten made light account. He believed that Pottinger was an alarmist. It is true, also, that an expedition was going out to Zao, to reduce some turbulent robber tribes; but this necessity he attributed to the indiscretion of one of our own officers, who had needlessly attacked the place with insufficient means, and been compelled to beat a retreat.* The expedition, too, as Macnaghten said, was only a "little go;" and immensely popular with our officers, who were zealously volunteering for the sport, as though it had been a battu or a steeple-chase.†

* *Sir W. H. Macnaghten to Major Rawlinson. MS. Correspondence.*

† Brigadier Roberts says, that when the Kohistanee expedition of 1840, which nearly had such a disastrous termination, was first pro-

The popular expedition into the Zoormut country was completely successful. Macgregor, who accompanied the force in the character of political adviser, found the rebellious forts evacuated. He had only, therefore, to destroy them. The results, however, of the movement were not wholly pacificatory. Pottinger said that the feeling which it engendered in the Kohistan was extremely unfavourable to us. It confirmed, he said, in the minds of the malcontents, "the belief so industriously spread of our difficulties, whilst rumours from Herat and Candahar of invasion, renewed rebellion, and disturbances, were again spread abroad." *

During the early part of October the Kohistanees remained perfectly quiet. But every hour, said Pottinger, "brought rumours of the formation of an extensive conspiracy." These he at first doubted; but he reported them to the Envoy, and asked for information on the subject. The answer was, that neither Macnaghten nor Burnes could perceive any grounds for suspicion.

In the mean while, the Eastern Ghilzyes were breaking out into revolt.† They had the same cause of complaint as the Kohistanees. The money-bag, which had kept them in order, was beginning to fail. It is a moot point whether revenge or avarice is the stronger feeling in the Afghan breast. Both were now arrayed against us. The bayonet and the money-bag were failing to do their work.

The expenses of the occupation of Afghanistan had long

jected, it was looked upon as a mere party of pleasure, and that ladies were talking of joining it. It does not appear whether they had any notion of participating in the pleasures of the popular expedition to Zao.

* *Major Pottinger's Budeeabad Report.*

† Pottinger was of opinion that the Ghilzyes, the Kohistanees, and the Douranees, were all leagued together; and that the compact between them was formed about the end of September.

been telling fearfully upon the revenues of India. Lord Auckland had been slow to look the intolerable evil of this exhausting drain fairly in the face. But the other members of the Supreme Council had been less slow to address themselves fully to the subject; and the home authorities had written out urgent letters regarding the miserable results of the continued occupation of a country that yielded nothing but strife. Looking at the matter in the most favourable point of view, it was found that the support of Shah Soojah cost the treasury of India at least a million and a quarter a year. The Board of Control, or that fusion of the two authorities of the crown and the company, known as the Secret Committee, had taken, at the close of 1840, a correct and statesman-like view of the subject, and had written out, that they could see nothing in the continued support of Shah Soojah, who, it was plain, had no hold upon the affections of the people, to compensate for this alarming exhaustion of the financial resources of India, and the necessary injuries inflicted upon the people by such a fearful waste of the revenues of the country.

On the last day of the year they had clearly and emphatically propounded their views of this important question, saying;—"We pronounce our decided opinion that for many years to come, the restored monarchy will have need of a British force, in order to maintain peace in its own territory, and prevent aggression from without. We must add, that to attempt to accomplish this by a small force, or by the mere influence of British Residents, will, in our opinion, be most unwise and frivolous, and that we should prefer the entire abandonment of the country, and a frank confession of complete failure, to any such policy. Even financial considerations justify this view, inasmuch as a strong and adequate military establishment, costly as it must be, will hardly entail so much expense upon you as

those repeated revolts and disorders which must arise in an ill-governed, half-subdued country; and which will compel you to make great and sudden efforts to maintain your character, and recover predominance. To whatever quarter we direct our attention, we behold the restored monarchy menaced by dangers, which cannot possibly be encountered by the military means at the disposal of the minister at the Court of Shah Soojah, and we again desire you seriously to consider which of the two alternatives (a speedy retreat from Afghanistan, or a considerable increase of the military force in that country), you may feel it your duty to adopt. We are convinced that you have no middle course to pursue with safety and with honour." The letter enunciating these views had been scarcely signed when intelligence of the surrender of Dost Mahomed was received in England. But these tidings had caused no change in the opinions of the Secret Committee, and on the 2nd of January, 1841, they had written again to the Supreme Government, saying, "The surrender of Dost Mahomed does not alter the views contained in our late letters, and we hope that advantage will be taken of it to settle affairs in Afghanistan according to those views."

When these letters reached Calcutta, in the spring of 1841, it had become a matter for the serious consideration of the Indian Government, whether the policy, which had proved so utterly disastrous, should not be openly and boldly abandoned. The question came before the Supreme Council at the end of March.* Either by some negli-

* *Sir Jasper Nicolls' MS. Journal*—some passages of which may be cited in illustration of this part of the inner history of the war:

"*March* 12.—My letter of the 10th of November will be found difficult to parry, after all; and I regret to say, that the immense expenditure cannot long be borne. A million a year will not cover our charges; and Lord Auckland's answers to the last week's applications prove to me that *he* begins to feel it.

"*March* 21.—We are called upon to make early and large remit-

gence, or by some juggle, the opinions of the military members of Council were not obtained. Lord Auckland and the civilians decided in favour of the continued occupation of the country, though it was certain that it could only be done at the cost of a million and a quarter a year. But money had already become painfully scarce. It was necessary to recruit the exhausted treasury. There was no other mode of accomplishing this than by opening a new loan. Such a public declaration of the embarrassed condition of the government was distressing to Lord Auckland; but nothing else was to be done. So at the end of March he drew up an advertisement for a five per cent.

tances to the Upper Provinces; and fifty lakhs have been ordered (their requisitions increased in a week to eighty lakhs). Thirty lakhs went last week to Bombay, and twenty-nine are now at Ferozepore, waiting for transmission. This will never do. Even if we had a firmer hold of Afghanistan than we have, we should be compelled to give it up, for a drain of a million a year will infallibly swamp us. Even a good share of the Punjab would not cover this great charge. Lord Auckland is not inclined to look this in the face, and acknowledge by a loan the unfortunate result of our successes.

"*March* 26.—Lord Auckland sent home a long minute regarding Herat. . . : He means to preserve our footing in Afghanistan. Mr. Bird and Mr. Prinsep approve of this, though the latter roundly and justly asserts that it cannot be done under a crore and a quarter (a million and a quarter) annually; and that no present mode of extending our receipts to that extent, is open to us. Lord Auckland wrote a note to ask our opinions on the subject. Mr. Maddock never circulated the note. Sir W. Casement and myself were therefore silent. We are clearly in a great scrape. That country drains us of a million a year and more; and we only in truth are certain of the allegiance of the people within range of our guns and cavalry. . . . . One part of Lord Auckland's paper only will be received for a time. He states our resources to be only a crore less than when we crossed the Indus. The Accountant-General says, that on the 30th of April we may expect the reduction to amount to three crores and three-quarters. I told Prinsep that he had been very complaisant not to point this out."

loan.* It is a remarkable instance of that kind of monomaniac blindness which besets some men, under peculiar conditions of existence, that when Macnaghten learned that a new loan had been opened, he asked, "What can this be for?" and spoke of the war—*in China?* †

But the call was responded to but slowly.‡ Money did not come in freely, though it was going out with a freedom

* *Sir Jasper Nicolls' MS. Journal, March* 29.—"At last the advertisement for a loan is prepared, and will shortly appear. Though Lord Auckland did not advert to a deficiency of three-and-a-half crores in his paper on Afghanistan, he now acts upon it. This will force on the Court a decision as to our maintaining our position in that quarter at such a price, for they will assuredly never pay even the charges of the Shah.

"*May* 12.—Before I close this book (volume of the Journal), I would record my opinion, that the whole thing will break down. We cannot afford the heavy, yet increasing drain upon us. Nine thousand troops between Quettah and Kurachee; at least 16,000 of our army and the Shah's to the north of Quettah. The King's expenses to bear in part—twenty-eight political officers to pay, besides Macnaghten—Dost Mahomed's allowance—barracks—a fort or two to build—loss by exchange, &c., &c. To me it is alarming. The silver does not return, and it is becoming scarce."

† "You will have seen that Government is opening a new five per cent. loan. What can this be for? I apprehend it augurs ill for the Chinese settlement, and that we shall have that work to do over again."—[*Sir W. H. Macnaghten to Major Rawlinson: April* 20, 1841.—*MS. Correspondence.*]

‡ *Sir Jasper Nicolls' MS. Journal, May* 20.—"Here is a very untoward account of the Afghan finances. It will never do to have India drained of a million and a quarter annually for a rocky frontier, requiring about 25,000 men and expensive establishments to hold it even by threats, as at present. The specie, too, is drawn away not to return. Little comes from China. How is it to end? Money is not rapidly subscribed to the loan, because it gains twelve to eighteen per cent. for short periods elsewhere—amongst natives, twenty-four per cent. or more. Unless a large accession of Punjab territory comes in to connect us safely with Caubul, and to aid our very heavy expenses, *we must withdraw.*"

perhaps unexampled in the history of Indian finance; and the home authorities still continued to write out, as Sir Jasper Nicolls and others in India were declaring, that it had become necessary either to withdraw altogether from Afghanistan, or to fall back upon the alternative of a large augmentation of the army. As the year advanced, too, other influences were at work to move the Indian Government to consider more and more intently the subject of the continued drain upon the resources of India. Great Britain was on the eve of a change of ministry, which would settle in Downing-street a party of Conservative statesmen, and send to Calcutta one of their number, known to be hostile to the whole policy of the expedition across the Indus; and Macnaghten was already beginning to tremble at the thought of what he called prospectively an "unparalleled atrocity"—but what many would have regarded as an act of wisdom and justice—the withdrawal of the British army from Afghanistan. How strongly the Envoy felt upon this subject, and in what manner he argued against it, may be gathered from a letter which, on the 25th of September, he addressed to the Governor of Agra. Still he continued to report that the whole country was quiet, and insisted that the Shah's force, aided by one European regiment at Caubul, and another at Candahar, would be sufficient to keep the whole country in order:

. . . . . Rumours are rife as to the intentions of the Tories towards this country, when they get into power. If they deprive the Shah altogether of our support, I have no hesitation in saying (and that is saying a great deal) they will commit an unparalleled political atrocity. The consequences would be frightful. The act would not only involve a positive breach of treaty, but it would be a cheat of the first magnitude. Had we left Shah Soojah alone, after seating him on the throne, the case would have been different. He would have adopted the Afghan method of securing his sovereignty. But we insisted upon his acting according to European notions of policy, and we have left all his enemies intact

—powerless, only because we are here. In short, we should leave him with all the odium of having called in the aid of foreign infidel auxiliaries, and with none of those safeguards which he himself would have provided for his security. How could we expect him, under such circumstances, to maintain his power? I know that he would not attempt it. He would pack up his all, and return to his asylum in India, the moment our resolution was imparted to him. We have effectually prevented his forming a party for himself. In a few years hence, when the present generation of turbulent intriguers shall have been swept away, the task will be comparatively easy. As it is, the progress we have made towards pacifying, or rather subjugating (for neither the Douranees nor the Ghilzyes were ever before *subject* to a monarchy), is perfectly wonderful. The Douranee Kings kept these unruly tribes in good humour by leading them to foreign conquest. The Barukzye rulers kept them down by sharing their power with some, and sowing dissensions amongst others, by the most paltry and unjustifiable shifts and expedients, to which the Shah could not, if it were in his nature even, have recourse. Now the whole country is as quiet as one of our Indian chiefships, and more so—but the reaction would be tremendous if the weight of our power was suddenly taken off. There are gangs of robbers here and there which it would be desirable to extirpate; and I had intended to postpone this job till a more favourable opportunity; but you will see, from my official letters, that it has been forced upon me, by Captain Hay's proceedings, at an earlier period than I anticipated. We are well prepared, however, and the coercion of these brigands will have an excellent effect all over the country. Dost Mahomed not only tolerated them, but went snacks in their spoils. After their dispersion shall have been effected, there will be literally nothing to do except the subjugation of Nijrow. Pottinger has a project for effecting this, without trouble or expense, by marching through their country the troops returning to Hindostan and Jellalabad. I have submitted this to the General; and should it be carried into effect, I shall beg of government to send us no more troops, for they would only be an incumbrance. A million and a quarter per annum is certainly an awful outlay; but if the items were examined, you would find that a full moiety of this is to be laid to the account of Mr. Bell's proceedings in Upper Sindh, where they have had an army, *cui bono?* larger than the Army of the Indus. All this profligate expenditure will now cease, and, barring Herat, I am quite certain that the Shah's force would be ample, with the addition of one

European regiment at Caubul and another at Candahar, to keep the entire country in order. I am, too, making great reduction in our political expenditure; and I feel certain that, in a very short time, an outlay of thirty lakhs per annum will cover, and more than cover, all our expenses. The process of macadamization (which, notwithstanding the present lull, I cannot but consider as near at hand) would reduce our outlay to nothing. I should not be surprised to see Colonel Stoddart and Arthur Conolly walking in any fine morning. I am glad you approved of the wig I conveyed to the latter. I am satisfied it adverted from him worse consequences. His enthusiasm, which I found it impossible to repress, is continually leading him into scrapes.* . . .

Such, at the close of September, were Macnaghten's views of our continued occupation of Afghanistan. But, before this, the letters of the Secret Committee, the orders of the Supreme Government, and the portentous shadow of the coming Tory ministry, had roused Macnaghten to a sense of the great fact, that it was necessary to do something to render less startlingly and offensively conspicuous the drain upon the resources of India, which was exhausting the country, and paralysing the energies of its rulers. So it was determined to carry into effect a system of economy, to be applied, wherever it could be applied, to the expenditure of Afghanistan; and, as ordinarily happens, both in the concerns of public and of private life, the retrenchments which were first instituted were those which ought to have been last. Acting in accordance with the known wishes of government, Macnaghten began to retrench the stipends, or subsidies, paid to the chiefs. He knew how distasteful the measure would be; he was apprehensive of its results. But money was wanted, and he was compelled to give it effect.†

* *MS. Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*

† The retrenchments, too, were to touch the Court. "I have suggested sundry retrenchments," he wrote to Rawlinson, "which, though necessary, will be most unpalatable to his Majesty and his myrmidons."

The blow fell upon all the chiefs about the capital—upon the Ghilzyes, upon the Kohistanees, upon the Caubulees, upon the Momunds, even upon the Kuzzilbashes. Peaceful remonstrance was in vain. So they held secret meetings, and entered into a confederacy to overawe the existing government, binding themselves by oaths to support each other in their efforts to recover what they had lost; or, failing in this, to subvert the system out of which these injurious proceedings had arisen. Foremost in this movement were the Eastern Ghilzyes. Affected by the general retrenchments, they had also particular grievances of their own.* They were the first, therefore, to throw off the mask. So they quitted Caubul—occupied the passes on the road to Jellalabad—plundered a valuable cafila—and entirely cut off our communications with the provinces of Hindostan.

Upon this, Humza Khan, the governor of the Ghilzyes, was sent out to bring them back to their allegiance. "Humza Khan," wrote Macnaghten to Macgregor, on the 2nd of October, "who is at the bottom of the whole conspiracy, has been sent out by his Majesty to bring back the Ghilzye chiefs who have fled; but I have little hope of the success of his mission." † Humza Khan, whose own stipend was included in the general retrenchment, had been commissioned to carry the obnoxious measure into effect; and he had instigated the chiefs to resist it. He

* "The Ghilzyes, however, had another grievance—viz., that during the rule of Ameer Mahomed Khan (Dost Mahomed's brother), who had managed partially to subdue this wild tribe, he had effected a reduction in their pay of 13,000 rupees, which was restored to them in 1839, on the return of the Shah; but was again reduced on the present occasion. Further, they were held responsible for thefts committed beyond their respective boundaries."—[*Captain Macgregor's Report.—MS. Records.*]

† *MS. Records.* See the Duke of Wellington's Comments on this subject in the Appendix.

was now sent out to quell a disturbance of which he was himself the parent and the nurse.

These movements did not at first much alarm Macnaghten. He was intent upon his departure from Caubul; and he said that the outbreak had happened at a fortunate moment, as his own party and the troops proceeding to the provinces could quell it on their way to India. "You will have heard ere now," he wrote on the 3rd of October, to Major Rawlinson, "of my appointment to Bombay. I could wish that this most honourable distinction had been withheld a little longer, until I could have pronounced our relations in this country as being entirely satisfactory; but, thanks in a great measure to your zealous co-operation, I may even now say, that every thing is rapidly verging to that happy consummation. No time is fixed for my departure. That will depend upon the instructions I receive from Lord Auckland. Should his Lordship direct me to deliver over my charge to Burnes, there is little or nothing, that I know of, to detain me, and I ought to be in Bombay by the middle of December. I am suffering a little anxiety just now, as the Eastern Ghilzye chiefs have turned *Yaghee*, in consequence, I believe, of the reduction of their allowances, and their being required to sign an ittezain against robberies. We have sent to bring them back to their allegiance, and I think there will be no difficulty about them, unless the root of the *Pussad* lies deeper, and they are, as some assert, in league with Mahomed Akbar. In that case, it will be necessary to undertake operations on a larger scale against Nijrow and Tugao, in the latter of which districts the Moofsids (rebels) have taken refuge. They are very kind in breaking out just at the moment most opportune for our purposes. The troops will take them *en route* to India. To-morrow I hope our expedition will reach the refractory forts of Zao, and teach them a most salutary lesson."

But after a few days, he began to take a more serious view of the matter; and he urged Macgregor to return with all despatch to Caubul, that he might accompany the expedition he was about to send out against the rebels. But at the same time he wrote to Rawlinson, that he did not apprehend any open opposition; and he never seemed to doubt that the insurrectionary movement would promptly be put down.

Sale's brigade, which was returning to the provinces, was, it has been seen, to stifle the insurrection *en route* to Jellalabad. Macnaghten, however, thought of strengthening the force, with a view to the operations against the Ghilzyes, and he wrote to Captain Trevor, who, pending the arrival of Macgregor, was holding the enemy in negotiation, that he believed the General would send out "two eight-inch mortars, two iron nine-pounder guns, Abbott's battery, the 5th Cavalry, the Sappers and Miners, and the 13th Queen's, with the 35th and 37th Native Infantry."* But he continued to talk of the "impudence of the rascals," and expressed his belief that, the insurrection put down, the country would be quieter than ever.† On the 9th of

* The 37th Native Infantry and the 5th Cavalry were not a part of the relieved brigade.

† "*October* 11.—One down, t'other come on, is the principle with these vagabonds; and lucky for us that it is so. No sooner have we put down one rebellion than another starts up. The Eastern Ghilzyes are now in an uproar, and our communications with Jellalabad are completely cut off. This state of things—*Inshallah!*—will not last long. Only imagine the impudence of the rascals in having taken up a position, with four or five hundred men, in the Khoord-Caubul Pass, not fifteen miles from the capital. I hope they will be driven out of that either to-day or to-morrow; but the pass is an ugly one to force. They fired last night upon the 35th Regiment, and succeeded in killing or wounding twenty-four Sepoys. Tugao has been the nursery, and Humza Khan the dry-nurse of this insurrection. Tugao will be visited, I hope, in a day or two, and I have solicited his Majesty to put Humza in durance vile, and to confiscate all his property. This

October, Colonel Monteith marched from Caubul, with the 35th Native Infantry, a squadron of the 5th Cavalry, two guns of Abbott's battery under Dawes, and Broadfoot's Sappers and Miners. That night his camp was attacked at Bootkhak—the first march on the Jellalabad road. On the 10th, therefore, Sale received orders to march at once with the 13th Light Infantry, and on the following day he started to clear the passes. On the 12th, he entered the defile of Khoord-Caubul. The enemy occupied the heights in considerable force, and, in their own peculiar style of warfare, opened a galling fire upon our advancing column. Sale was wounded at the first onset, and Dennie took command of the troops. He spoke with admiration of "the fearless manner in which the men of the 13th, chiefly young soldiers, ascended heights nearly perpendicular under the sharp fire of the insurgents;" and added, that the Sepoys of the 35th, who had fought under him at Bameean, "rivalled and equalled them in steadiness, activity, and intrepidity."* The pass was cleared, and then the 13th retraced its steps to Bootkhak, whilst Monteith, with the 35th and the other details, was left encamped in the Khoord-Caubul valley.

émeute of ours is particularly provoking just as I am about to quit Afghanistan. I had hoped to leave the country in perfect tranquillity; and I still think that it will be quieter than ever it was, after the insurrection is put down. It is particularly provoking that Macgregor is absent with a large portion of our force at this juncture. My accounts from Burn at Gundamuck are very satisfactory. The efforts of the rebels to raise the tribes are as unavailing as incessant. His Majesty's name has been freely used, as usual; no wonder—it is a tower of strength; but never was a more foul calumny uttered than that which would associate his Majesty with our enemies."—[*Sir W. H. Macnaghten to Major Rawlinson. MS. Correspondence.*]

* Captain Younghusband, of the 35th, Captain Wade, the Brigade-Major of the force, and Lieutenants Mein and Oakes, of the 13th, were wounded in this affair.

In the mean while, Macgregor had returned from the Zoormut country. The Envoy had known him long, and had abundant confidence in the man. An officer of the Bengal Artillery, who had been a favourite member of Lord Auckland's personal staff, he had accompanied Macnaghten to Lahore and Loodhianah, on the mission to negotiate the Tripartite treaty, and had subsequently been employed in political superintendence of the country between Caubul and Jellalabad, where, by an admirable union of the vigorous and the conciliatory in his treatment of the tribes, he had won both their respect and their affection. The Envoy now believed that Macgregor would soon restore the country to tranquillity, and was impatient until his return. Macgregor reached Caubul on the 11th of October, and soon started for Monteith's camp. Macnaghten, who believed that the outbreak was local and accidental, looked with eagerness to the result. He took little heed of what was going on in the Kohistan. Nor did he think that the Douranee Khans, whose "noses he had brought to the grindstone," were plotting their emancipation from the thraldom of the infidels.

But Pottinger, in the Kohistan, plainly saw the storm that was brewing — plainly saw the dangers and difficulties by which he was surrounded. As the month of October advanced, the attitude of the Kohistanees and the Nijrowees was more and more threatening. Meer Musjedee, the Nijrow chief, a man of a resentful and implacable temper, had been, some time before, described in the newspaper paragraphs of the day as stalking about the country, and sowing broad-cast the seeds of rebellion. The measures of the King's government had long before made these very people, who had risen up against the tyranny of Dost Mahomed, ripe for revolt against the more consummate tyranny of the Shah. And now, in the middle of October, Pottinger saw that the state of things was fast approaching

a crisis; so he demanded hostages from the Kohistanee chiefs. To this the Envoy reluctantly consented. "And," wrote Pottinger, in his official account of these transactions, "I only succeeded in procuring them by the end of the month, when everything betokened a speedy rupture with the Nijrowees." By this time, indeed, Meer Musjedee had openly raised the standard of revolt, and the people were clustering around it.

Macnaghten thought very lightly of these movements in the Kohistan. Nothing disturbed his faith in the general tranquillity of the country, and the popularity of the double government. He greatly desired the settlement of the Ghilzye question, for there was something palpable and undeniable in such a movement; and he was anxious to set his face towards the provinces of Hindostan. Eagerly, therefore, he looked for intelligence from Macgregor. He had begun, however, to doubt whether so troublesome a business could be settled by peaceful negotiation. "We must thresh the rascals, I fear, after all," he wrote to Macgregor, on the 17th; "but I don't think that the troops will be under weigh until the 20th. Is not this provoking? Abbott has made some excuse about his guns being injured. Pray write a circumstantial plan of the best means of surrounding and preventing the escape of the villains."* Abbott was not a man to make excuses of any kind, but the Envoy was becoming impatient. On the 18th, he wrote again: "It has been determined that the Sappers and Miners, the mountain train, and two companies of the 37th Native Infantry, march out to join you to-morrow morning. They will make one march to Khoord-Caubul. The next day I hope you will be joined by the 13th, the 37th, and Abbott's battery. I

* *Sir W. H. Macnaghten to Captain Macgregor: October* 17, 1841. *MS. Records.*

hope you will arrange the plan of attack before Sale arrives."* But although Macnaghten was eager to "thresh the rascals," certain prudential considerations suggested to him that it would only be expedient to punish them as much as could "conveniently" be done. It would not be convenient, at such a time, to exasperate the insurgents too much, and drive them to block up the passes, and plunder everything that came in their way.

In the mean while, Monteith, in his isolated post in the Khoord-Caubul valley, was exposed, if not to some danger, to considerable inconvenience, for the enemy made a night-attack upon his camp, aided by the treachery of the Afghan horsemen, under the Shah's Meer Akhor, (or Master of the Horse) who admitted the rebels within their lines. One of our officers, Lieutenant Jenkins, and several Sepoys, were killed; and a number of camels carried off by the enemy. Monteith reported the treachery of his Afghan friends, and the Envoy resented his just suspicions. But he was now to be relieved. Sale appeared with two more infantry regiments, with more guns, and more sabres; and after a brief halt, for want of carriage, which much tried the patience of the Envoy, the whole swept on to Tezeen. Here the force halted for some days, and Macgregor busied himself in negotiations with the enemy. Macnaghten had instructed him to accommodate matters, if it could be done without any loss of honour; and Macgregor was candid enough to acknowledge that the insurrection of the Ghilzyes had been brought about by "harsh and unjust" measures of our own. So he opened a communication with the rebel chiefs; and, being known to most of them, consented to a personal interview. So Macgregor met the chiefs. There was a long and animated

* *Sir W. H. Macnaghten to Captain Macgregor: October* 18, 1841. *MS. Records.*

discussion. They demanded that their salaries should be restored to their former footing, and that they should not be held responsible for robberies committed beyond their respective boundaries. To these demands Macgregor consented. But they demanded also that Shool Mahomed, who had been removed, as a rebel, from the chiefship of their tribe, should be reinstated; and this point Macgregor resolutely refused to concede, in the belief that such concession would compromise the honour of the Government. The chiefs yielded, and Macgregor returned to camp. It was supposed that the Ghilzye affair had been "patched up after a fashion;" not, perhaps, without some loss of dignity, but with as much vigour as was convenient at the time. The chiefs sent in their agents to remain with Macgregor, ostensibly to aid him in the re-establishment of the police, and post stations on the road; and Macnaghten was able to report that the affair was settled.

He thought, however, that the terms granted to the rebels were too favourable; and the King was dissatisfied with them; but the Envoy replied that it was the treachery of the Shah's own people that had paralysed the efforts of our negotiators. Indeed, it was known that people about the Court had left Caubul for the purpose of joining in a night-attack upon our troops. Still Macnaghten could not believe that there was any wide-spread feeling of disaffection among the chiefs and the people of Caubul; nor when Pottinger sent in gloomy reports from the Kohistan, could he bring himself to think that they were anything but the creations of a too excitable brain. "Pottinger writes," he said,* "as if he were about to be invaded by the Nijrowees, but I imagine that there is little ground

* *Sir W. H. Macnaghten to Major Rawlinson.*—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

for this alarm, and that at all events the fellows will sneak into their holes again when they hear that the Ghilzyes are quiet." This was written on the 26th of October. On the 29th he wrote again, saying, "I trust I have at last got Pottinger into a pacific mood, though I tremble when I open any of his letters, lest I should find that he has got to loggerheads with some of his neighbours. In the present excited state of men's minds, a row in any quarter would be widely infectious, and we are not in a condition to stand much baiting."

Meanwhile, Macgregor had learnt the value of his treaty. From Tezeen to Gundamuck the agents of the Ghilzye chiefs were in our camp; but there was some hard fighting for the brigade. The enemy mustered in force, and attacked our column; and the old excuse was made, that it was owing to no faithlessness on the part of the chiefs, but to their inability to control the tribes. It was a terrible country for a baggage-encumbered force to toil through, in the face of an active enemy. Jugdulluck was gained with little opposition; but, on the next march, it was seen that the heights were bristling with armed men, and a heavy fire was poured in from all the salient points, on which, with the instincts of the mountaineer, they had posted themselves, with such terrible effect. Sale threw out his flanking parties, and the light troops, skirmishing well up the hill sides, dislodged the enemy, whilst a party under Captain Wilkinson, pushing through the defile, found that the main outlet had not been guarded, and that the passage was clear. The march was resumed; but the enemy were not yet weary of the contest. Reappearing in great numbers, they fell furiously upon our rear-guard, and, for a time, our people, thus suddenly assailed, were in a state of terrible disorder. The energetic efforts of our officers brought back our men to a sense of their duty, and restored

the confidence, which, for a little space, had forsaken the young soldiers. Broadfoot, Backhouse, and Fenwick, are said to have rallied and re-animated them. But the loss that fell upon them was heavy—more than a hundred men were killed and wounded; and among them was Captain Wyndham, of the 35th, who fell like a brave soldier in the unequal fight.*

Sale halted at Gundamuck. Macnaghten heard of the loss sustained between Jugdulluck and Soorkhab, but wrote to Macgregor, on the 1st of November, that he "hoped the business last reported was the expiring effort of the rebels;" and that the party would have dispersed, and thannahs been re-established. To Major Rawlinson he wrote on the same day, and congratulated him on the tranquil appearance that affairs had assumed in the direction of Candahar. It was now the very day that he had fixed upon for his departure from Caubul; and still he did not doubt for a moment that his emancipation was close at hand.

* "The only officer killed, Wyndham, a captain of the 35th Native Infantry, fell nobly. Himself lame from a hurt, he had dismounted at that moment of peril to save the life of a wounded soldier, by bearing him from the combat on his charger. When the rear-guard broke before the onset of the Ghilzyes, Wyndham, unable to keep pace with the pursued, turned, fought, and, overpowered by numbers, fell beneath the swords and knives of an unsparing foe."—[*Calcutta Review.*]

BOOK V.

[1841—1842.]

CHAPTER I.

[November—1841.]

The Outbreak at Caubul—Approaching Departure of the Envoy—Immediate Causes of the Rebellion—Death of Sir Alexander Burnes—His Character—Spread of the Insurrection—Indecision of the British Authorities.

BRIGHTLY and cheerfully the month of November dawned upon the retiring envoy and his successor. Macnaghten was about to lay down the reins of office, and turn his face, in a day or two, towards Bombay. Burnes, rejoicing in the thought of being "supreme at last" (but somewhat disquieted by the silence of government on the subject), was stretching out his hand to receive the prize he had so long coveted. The one was as eager to depart as the other to see the departure of his chief; and both were profoundly impressed with the conviction that the great administrative change was about to be effected under an unclouded sky.

There were others, however, who viewed with different eyes the portents that were gathering around them—

others who warned the envoy and Burnes of the dangers of such a confederacy as had been formed against the British in Afghanistan. Among these was Captain Colin Mackenzie, an officer of the Madras army, whose enquiring and adventurous spirit had prompted him to seek service in Afghanistan, and who had soon recommended himself to the Envoy by his intelligence and high character for political employment. He told Macnaghten at the end of October that Akbar Khan, the ablest and most determined of Dost Mahomed's sons, had arrived at Bameean from Bokhara, and that he surely meditated mischief. But the envoy only replied that if it were so, Oosman Khan, the Wuzeer, would have known and reported the circumstance to him. About the same time, Lieutenant John Conolly, a young relative of Macnaghten, and a member of his personal staff, told him that a rising in the city was meditated, and that the shopkeepers knew so well what was coming, that they refused to sell their goods to our people lest they should be murdered for favouring the Feringhees.

Among these, also, was Mohun Lal. Before the arrival of Captain Macgregor from the Zoormut country, he had been deputed to accompany General Sale's camp, and on his return to Caubul, he had laid the result of his observations, whilst on that expedition, before Sir Alexander Burnes. Entering fully upon the nature and extent of the confederacy, the Moonshee emphatically declared his opinion that it would be dangerous to disregard such threatening indications of a coming storm, and that if the conspiracy were not crushed in its infancy, it would become too strong to be easily suppressed. Burnes replied that the day had not arrived for his interference—that he could not meddle with the arrangements of the Envoy; but that Macnaghten would shortly turn his back upon Caubul, and that measures should then be taken to con-

ciliate the Ghilzyes and Kohistanees, by raising their allowances again to the point from which they had been reduced. On the 1st of November, Mohun Lal again pressed the subject of the hostile confederacy upon the expectant minister. Burnes stood up from his chair, and said, with a sigh, that the time had come for the British to leave the country; * but, on the same evening, he congratulated Sir William Macnaghten on his approaching departure at a period of such profound tranquillity.†

* I must give Mohun Lal's own words, in spite of their eccentric phraseology: "On the 1st of November," he writes, "I saw Sir Alexander Burnes, and told him that the confederacy has been grown very high, and we should fear the consequence. He stood up from his chair, sighed, and said he knows nothing but the time has arrived that we should leave this country."—[*Letter of Mohun Lal to J. R. Colvin, Esq., January* 9, 1842.—*MS. Records.*] In a letter to another correspondent, Mohun Lal makes a similar statement; and adds that, upon the same night, Taj Mahomed called upon Burnes, to no purpose, with a like warning: "On the 1st of November I saw him at evening, and informed him, according to the conversation of Mahomed Meerza Khan, our great enemy, that the chiefs are contriving plans to stand against us, and therefore it will not be safe to remain without a sufficient guard in the city. He replied, that if he were to ask the Envoy to send him a strong guard, it will show that he was fearing; and at the same [time] he made an astonishing speech, by saying that the time is not far when we must leave this country. Taj Mahomed, son of Gholam Mahomed Khan, the Douranee chief, came at night to him, and informed what the chiefs intended to do, but he turned him out under the pretended aspect that we do not care for such things. Our old friend, Naib Sheriff, came and asked him to allow his son, with 100 men, to remain day and night in his place till the Ghilzye affair is settled—but he did not agree."—[*Letter of Mohun Lal to Dr. James Burnes.—MS. Correspondence.*]

† This is stated on the authority of Sir William Macnaghten: "I may be considered culpable," he said, in an unfinished memorandum, found after his death, "for not having foreseen the coming storm; to this I can only reply that others, who had much better opportunities of watching the feelings of the people, had no suspicion of what was

On that very evening the hostile chiefs met and determined, in conclave, upon the measures to be taken for the overthrow of the British power in Afghanistan. To rouse the people into action by a skilful use of the king's name, seemed to be the safest course of procedure. But doubts arose as to whether it were wiser to enlist the loyal sympathies of his subjects, or to excite their indignation against him. It might be announced, on the one hand, that the King had given orders for the destruction of the infidels; or a report might be spread that he had declared his intention of seizing the principal chiefs, and sending them prisoners to London. It would seem that the rebels did both; and at the same time lulled the suspicions of the Envoy by frequent visits to his house, and loud assurances of friendship. Abdoollah Khan, Achekzye, announced the certainty of their expatriation in a letter to the principal Sirdars, whilst the other object was accomplished by forging the King's seal to a document, ordering the destruction of the Feringhees, or rather, forging the document to the seal.* Men of different tribes and conflicting interests had made

coming. The late Sir A. Burnes was with me the evening before the insurrection occurred, and it is a singular fact that he should have congratulated me on my approaching departure at a season of such profound tranquillity."—[*Unpublished Papers of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*] See further illustrations of this subject in *Appendix*.

* "The principal rebels," wrote Sir William Macnaghten, in a letter to Lord Auckland, of which only a fragment has been recovered, "met, on the night before, and [relying] on the inflammable disposition of the people of Caubul, they first gave out that it was the order of his Majesty to put all infidels to death, and this, of course, gained them a great accession of strength. But his Majesty has behaved throughout with the most marked fidelity, judgment, and prudence. By forged orders from him for our destruction, by the well-known process of washing out the contents of a genuinely sealed paper, and substituting their own wicked inventions. * * * *" (*Sentence left imperfect.*)—[*Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*]

common cause against the Feringhees. Barukzye, Populzye, Achekzye, and Ghilzye chiefs were all banded together. Why they should have fixed upon that particular 2nd of November for the first open demonstration at Caubul it is not easy to conjecture. To have waited a few days would have been to have waited for the departure of the Envoy, of the General, and of a considerable body of troops from Afghanistan. The supposition, indeed, is, that however widely spread the disaffection, and however extensive the confederacy, the first outbreak was not the result of any general organisation, but was the movement only of a section of the national party. It was too insignificant in itself, and there was too little evidence of design in it, to have sprung out of any matured plan of action on the part of a powerful confederacy. What that confederacy was may be gathered from Macnaghten's admission, that when, early in December, he met the Afghan leaders at a conference, he saw assembled before him the heads of nearly all the chief tribes in the country.

The meeting on the night of the 1st of November was held at the house of Sydat Khan, Alekozye. Foremost among the chiefs there assembled was Abdoollah Khan. By nature proud, cruel, and vindictive, this man was smarting under a sense of injuries inflicted upon him by the restored Suddozye government, and of insults received from one of Shah Soojah's British allies. On the restoration of the King, Abdoollah Khan had been dispossessed of the chiefship of his tribe, and had ever since been retained about the Court, rather as a hostage than as a recognised officer of the government. Ever ready to promote disaffection and encourage revolt, he had seen with delight the rising of the Ghilzyes, and during their occupation of the passes had been eagerly intriguing with the chiefs. Aware of Abdoollah Khan's

designs, Burnes sent him an angry message—called him a dog—and threatened to recommend Shah Soojah to deprive the rebel of his ears. When the chiefs met together on the night of the 1st of November, this indignity was rankling in the breast of the Khan. The immediate course to be pursued came under discussion, and he at once proposed that the first overt act of violence on the morrow should be an attack on the house of the man who had so insulted him. The proposal was accepted by the assembled chiefs; but so little did they anticipate more than a burst of success at the outset, that not one of them ventured personally to take part in a movement which they believed would be promptly avenged.

Day had scarcely dawned on the 2nd of November, when a rumour reached the cantonments, and was at once conveyed to the Mission-house, that there was a commotion in the city. John Conolly, who was to have accompanied him to Bombay, was giving directions about the packing of some of the Envoy's chattels, when an Afghan rushed wildly in, and announced that there was an insurrection in the city. Conolly went out immediately, heard the firing in the streets, and hastened to convey the intelligence to Macnaghten.* The Envoy received it with composure. There was nothing in it, he thought, to startle or to dismay a man with sound nerves and a clear understanding. Presently a note was brought him from Burnes. It stated that there was great excitement in the city, especially in the neighbourhood of his residence; but it spoke slightingly of the disturbance, and said that it would speedily be suppressed. Assistance, however, was sought. Burnes wanted military support;

* *Statement of Emaum-oollah-Khan—a chuprassie in the service of Lieutenant John Conolly.*—[*MS. Records.*]

and Macnaghten, still little alarmed by the tidings that had reached him, hurried to the quarters of the General. It was thought to be only a slight commotion. And so it was—at the outset. But before any assistance was sent to Burnes, he had been cut to pieces by an infuriated mob.

The houses of Sir Alexander Burnes and of Captain Johnson, the paymaster of the Shah's troops, were contiguous to each other in the city. On the preceding night, Captain Johnson had slept in cantonments. The expectant Resident was at home. Beneath his roof was his brother, Lieutenant Charles Burnes; and Lieutenant William Broadfoot, an officer of rare merit, who had been selected to fill the office of military secretary to the minister elect, and had just come in from Charekur to enter upon his new duties. It was now the anniversary of the day on which his brother had been slain by Dost Mahomed's troopers, in the disastrous affair of Purwundurrah; and it must have been with some melancholy recollections of the past, and some dismal forebodings of the future, that he now looked down from the upper gallery of Burnes's house, upon the angry crowd that was gathering beneath it.

Before daylight on that disastrous morning a friendly Afghan sought admittance to Burnes's house, eager to warn him of the danger with which he was encompassed. A plot had been hatched on the preceding night; and one of its first objects was said to be the assassination of the new Resident. But Burnes had nothing but incredulity to return to such friendly warnings. The man went. The insurgents were gathering. Then came Oosman Khan, the Wuzeer, crossing Burnes's threshold, with the same ominous story on his lips. It was no longer permitted to the English officer to wrap himself up in an impenetrable cloak of scepticism. Already was there a

stir in the streets. Already was an excited populace assembling beneath his windows. Earnestly the Afghan minister spoke of the danger, and implored Burnes to leave his house, to accompany him to the Balla Hissar, or to seek safety in cantonments. The Englishman, deaf to these appeals, confident that he could quell the tumult, and scorning the idea of quitting his post, rejected the friendly counsel of the Wuzeer, and remained to face the fury of the mob.

But even to Alexander Burnes, incredulous of imminent danger as he was, it seemed necessary to do something. He wrote to the Envoy, calling for support. And he sent messengers to Abdoollah Khan. Two chuprassies were despatched to the Achekzye chief, assuring him that if he would restrain the populace from violence, every effort would be made to adjust the grievances complained of by the people and the chiefs. One only of the messengers returned. He brought back nothing but wounds. The message had cost the other his life.

In the meanwhile, from a gallery in the upper part of his house, Burnes was haranguing the mob. Beside him were his brother and his friend. The crowd before his house increased in number and in fury. Some were thirsting for blood; others were greedy only for plunder. He might as well have addressed himself to a herd of savage beasts. Angry voices were lifted up in reply, clamoring for the lives of the English officers. And too surely did they gain the object of their desires. Broadfoot, who sold his life dearly, was the first to fall. A ball struck him on the chest; and the dogs of the city devoured his remains.

It was obvious now that nothing was to be done by expostulation; nothing by forbearance. The violence of the mob was increasing. That which at first had been an

insignificant crowd had now become a great multitude. The treasury of the Shah's paymaster was before them; and hundreds who had no wrongs to redress and no political animosity to vent, rushed to the spot, hungering after the spoil which lay so temptingly at hand. The streets were waving with a sea of heads; and the opposite houses were alive with people. It was no longer possible to look unappalled upon that fearful assemblage. A party of the insurgents had set fire to Burnes's stables;* had forced their way into his garden; and were calling to him to come down. His heart now sank within him. He saw clearly the danger that beset him—saw that the looked-for aid from the cantonment had failed him in the hour of his need. Nothing now was left to him, but to appeal to the avarice of his assailants. He offered them large sums of money, if they would only spare his own and his brother's life. Their answer was a repetition of the summons to "come down to the garden." Charles Burnes and a party of chuprassies were, at this time, firing on the mob. A Mussulman Cashmerian, who had entered the house, swore by the Koran that if they would cease firing upon the insurgents, he would convey Burnes and his brother through the garden in safety to the Kuzzilbash Fort. Disguising himself in some articles of native attire, Burnes accompanied the man to the door. He had stepped but a few paces into the garden, when his conductor called out with a loud voice, "This is Sekunder Burnes!"† The infuriated mob fell upon him with frantic energy. A frenzied moollah dealt the first murderous blow; and in a minute the work was complete. The brothers were cut

* Hyder Khan, who had been cutwal of the city, and had been removed through Burnes's instrumentality, is said to have brought fuel for the purpose from some contiguous *hummams* or baths.

† *Statement of Bowk Singh, a chuprassie in Sir A. Burnes's service.*

to pieces by the Afghan knives.* Naib Sheriff, true to the last, buried their mutilated remains.

So fell Alexander Burnes. In the vigour of his years —in the pride of life—within a few feet of the goal which he had long held so steadily in view. It has been said that he predicted the coming storm; and by others again that he refused to see it. He may have warned others; but he rejected all warning himself. It was only in keeping with the character of the man that he should have been subject to such fluctuations of feeling and opinion. Sometimes sanguine; sometimes desponding—sometimes confident; sometimes credulous—he gave to fleeting impressions all the importance and seeming permanency of settled convictions, and imbued surrounding objects with the colours of his own varying mind. At one time, he could discern with intuitive sagacity the hidden dangers besetting our position in Afghanistan, and illustrate his views with an impressive earnestness which caused him to be regarded by his official superior as a wildly speculative alarmist. At another, when destruction was impending over his head—when the weapon was sharpened to immolate him—he saw nothing but security and peace; and turned away from the warnings of those who would have saved him, with an incredulous smile upon his lips. This instability was a grievous fault; and grievously he answered it. But though unstable, he was not insincere. If he deceived others, he first of all deceived himself. If he gave utterance to conflicting opinions, they were all *his* opinions at the time of their birth. He was a man of an eager impulsive temperament; the slightest vicissitudes of the political

* This is Bowh Singh's statement. He says: "His brother, Captain Burnes, went out with him, and was killed dead before Sir Alexander." Mohun Lal says that Charles Burnes was killed before his brother went down to the garden.

atmosphere readily affected his mercurial nature; and he did not always think before he spoke. Hence it is that such varying opinions have been attributed to him—all perhaps with equal truth. A passing cloud, or a transient gleam of sunshine, and Afghanistan was either in the throes of a deadly convulsion, or lapped in heavenly repose.

It was the hard fate of Alexander Burnes to be over-rated at the outset and under-rated at the close of his career. It may be doubted whether justice has yet been rendered him—whether, on the one hand, what was innately and intrinsically good in him has been amply recognised, and whether on the other, the accidental circumstances of his position have been sufficiently taken into account. From the very commencement of the Afghan expedition Burnes was placed in a situation calculated neither to develop the better nor to correct the worse part of his character. In his own words, indeed, he was in "the most nondescript of situations." He had little or no power. He had no supreme and independent control of affairs; nor had he, like other political assistants, any detached employment of a subordinate character; but was an anomalous appendage to the British mission, looking out for the chance of succession to the upper seat. In such a position he felt uneasy and unsettled; he lived rather in the future than in the present; and chafed under the reflection that whilst, in all that related to the management of public affairs, he was an absolute cypher at the Afghan court, much of the odium of unpopular acts descended upon him; and that much of the discredit of failure would attach to him if the measures, which he was in nowise permitted to shape, were not crowned with success. There is reason to think that if fairer scope had been allowed for the display of his abilities, and a larger amount of responsibility had descended upon him, he would have shone with a brighter and a steadier light, and

left behind him a still more honourable name. His talents were great; his energies were great. What he lacked was stability of character. Power and responsibility would have steadied him. He would have walked with a firmer step and in a straighter course under a heavier burden of political duties. As it was, all the environments of his life at Caubul were two surely calculated to unhinge and unbalance even a more steadfast mind. It is right that all these things should be taken into account. It is right, too, that it should never be forgotten by those who would form a correct estimate of the character and career of Alexander Burnes, that both have been misrepresented in those collections of state papers which are supposed to furnish the best materials of history, but which are often in reality only one-sided compilations of garbled documents—counterfeits, which the ministerial stamp forces into currency, defrauding a present generation and handing down to posterity a chain of dangerous lies.

Burnes and his companions fell. There was a great plunder of property. The treasury of Captain Johnson, the Shah's paymaster, was sacked. Thirsting for gold, and thirsting for blood, the insurgents undermined the walls and burnt the gateway of the house; then falling, like wild beasts, on all whom they met, and slaughtering guards and servants—men, women, and children, alike, in their indiscriminate fury—they glutted themselves with the treasure,* and to complete their work of mischief, burnt all the records of the office. The noise in the city was now growing louder and louder. The multitude was swelling in numbers, and waxing more terrible in excitement and wrath. But still no measures were taken to quell the riot or chastise the rioters; no troops were

* "A lakh and seventy thousand rupees (17,000*l.*) of public money, besides my private property, amounting to upwards of ten thousand rupees."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal.—MS. Records.*]

poured into the city; no British officer led his battalions to the charge, or opened upon the enemy with a shower of unanswerable grape. The escort, at Burnes's house, held for some time in painful inactivity by his misplaced forbearance, had fought with a desperate energy, which, in the end, cost them their lives; and the guard at the pay-office, with scarcely less constancy and courage, had protected their charge until overwhelmed by the rush of their assailants, and slaughtered almost to a man. What could these little bands of loyal men do against the surging multitude that flooded the streets? Emboldened by impunity, the licentious crowd pushed on to new deeds of murder and rapine; and soon the whole city was in a roar of wild tumultuous excitement. Shops were gutted; houses were burned; men, women, and children, in the residences of our officers, mixed up in indiscriminate slaughter;—and all this with six thousand British troops within half an hour's march of the rebellious city.

From the Balla Hissar the King looked down upon the disturbed city beneath him. But even from that commanding position little could be seen of what was going on below in the narrow winding streets, which scarcely presented more than an expanse of flat house-tops to the gazers from above. A report had been industriously propagated that the insurgent movement had been favoured, if not directed, by the monarch himself; but his conduct at this moment was not such as to give colour to the suspicion, which soon began to shape itself in the minds of his British supporters, and which has not even now been dislodged. He was agitated, panic-struck, but not paralysed. The only movement made, on that ill-omened November morning, to crush the insurrection at its birth, was made by the King himself. He sent out a regiment of Hindostanee troops—that regiment which was still commanded by the Indo-Briton adventurer Campbell, who

had rendered Shah Soojah good service in his attempt to expel the Barukzye Sirdars.* Futteh Jung and the Wuzeer went with them. They moved down with some spirit upon the city; but shaped their course with such little wisdom that they were soon in disastrous flight. They should have moved along the base of the hill to the outer extremity of the short thoroughfare in which Burnes's house was situated. But instead of this they attempted to make their way through the heart of the city, and were soon entangled with their guns in its narrow, intricate streets. Thus embarrassed, they were at the mercy of the enemy. They lost, it was said, two hundred of their number,† were compelled to abandon their guns, and were soon to be seen hurrying back, a disorderly rabble, to the shelter of the Balla Hissar.

In the mean while, Brigadier Shelton, with a body of infantry and artillery, had made his way to the Balla Hissar, and arrived in time to cover the retreat of Campbell's regiment, and to save the guns from the grasp of the enemy. "Soon after my arrival," says the Brigadier in his narrative of these proceedings, "wounded men were coming in from the city. I was then informed that they belonged to the King's Hindostance Pultun, which his Majesty had sent into the city with two six-pounders. I despatched the light company of the 54th N.I. to the gate of the Balla Hissar leading into the town, and soon after the remainder of the King's Pultun and the two guns were driven in. The latter they were obliged to abandon,

* In 1834.—[*See Book I., Chapter VII.*]

† This, however, in all probability is a very exaggerated statement. There were, probably, not more than two or three hundred people in the Caubul bazaars opposing the march of the regiment. Eye-witnesses affirm that the latter fought with little gallantry on this occasion. It is said, too, that Futteh Jung, instead of encouraging the Hindostanees, encouraged the insurgents.

fortunately sufficiently under the wall to enable me to prevent the enemy from getting possession; but too near the houses for me to bring them in. I disposed a covering party accordingly, but on the enemy's opening his fire, the Shah's men rushed back into the gateway, and thus abandoned the enterprise." "I mention this," adds the Brigadier, "because it was said his Majesty was implicated in exciting the rebellion—for in such case he never would have made so noble an effort, and the only one that was made to strike at the root."*

On that day nothing else was done. Deserted by his personal attendants in the hour of danger, Shah Soojah seems to have sunk into a pitiable state of dejection and alarm. The defeat of his Hindostanees had given a deeper shade to his despondency; he was incapable of acting for himself or of offering counsel to others, and all who sought his presence were struck by the anxious expression of his countenance and the feeble petulance of his manner. Nothing effective had been done, and nothing more was to be done at all on that memorable day—General Elphinstone had been talking about to-morrow, when he should have been acting to-day. And so the evening of the 2nd of November fell upon an irritable people, established and fortified in resistance by the indecision of the authorities, against whom they had erected themselves, and the inactivity of the army by which they might have been crushed.

It is the common opinion of all competent authorities that a prompt and vigorous movement, on the morning of the 2nd of November, would have strangled the insurrection at its birth. The Afghans freely admitted this. A Populzye chief who was present at the meeting at Sydat Khan's house on the night of the 1st of November, told

* *Statement of Brigadier Shelton.—MS. Records.*

Major Rawlinson that not one of the chiefs, who then leagued themselves together, ventured to stir from his house until the afternoon of the following day. They expected that the first onset—the attack on the houses of Burnes and Johnson—would be successful; but they were under an equally strong conviction that the violence would be promptly avenged by the troops from cantonments, and they therefore refrained from committing themselves by taking any personal part in the *émeute*. It seems to have been the impression of the majority that such an outbreak at the capital would operate as a warning which the British in Afghanistan would hardly neglect, and that we should be glad, therefore, to withdraw our forces in the spring and leave the Douranees to their own devices.* "Not only I, but several other officers," says Captain Johnson, "have spoken to Afghans on the subject; there has never been one dissenting voice, that had a small party gone into the town prior to the plunder of my treasury and the murder of Burnes, the insurrection would have been instantly quashed. This was also the opinion of Captain Trevor, at that time living in the town."† Captain Mackenzie has given an equally emphatic opinion to the same effect. "During our expedition into Kohistan, under General MacCaskill," he writes, "I accompanied it, having been placed by General Pollock in charge of Shah-zadah Shapoor and the Kuzzilbash camp. In my frequent communications with Khan Shereen Khan, some of the late leaders, and other chiefs of the Kuzzilbash faction, all the circumstances of the late insurrection were over and over again recapitulated, one and all declaring positively that the slightest exhibition of energy on our part, in the first instance, more especially in

* *Private Correspondence.*
† *Journal of Captain Johnson.—MS.*

reinforcing my post and that of Trevor, would at once have decided the Kuzzilbashes, and all over whom they possessed any influence, in our favour. Khan Shereen Khan also confirmed the idea that an offensive movement on the opposite side of the town by Brigadier Shelton, had it been made in the early part of the fatal 2nd of November, would at once have crushed the insurrection."* Mohun Lal says, that in the first instance no more than thirty men were sent to surround Sir Alexander Burnes's house, and that the rest were drawn thither subsequently by the hope of plunder.† Captain Johnson, already quoted, adds, "The mob at the first outbreak did not exceed 100 men. They however speedily increased; the plunder of my treasury, my private property and that of Sir Alexander—seeing that no steps were taken to save either the one or the other, nor even what was of more value to us at that time, the life of Sir Alexander Burnes—was too great a temptation to the inhabitants of Caubul, and when 300 men would have been sufficient in the morning to have quelled the disturbance, 3000 would not have been adequate in the afternoon." ‡

* Letter from Captain Colin Mackenzie to Lieutenant Eyre.—[*Eyre's Journal.*]

† *Letter of Mohun Lal to Mr. Colvin, Private Secretary to the Governor-General.—MS.*

‡ *Captain Johnson's Journal.*—Eyre says that the commencement of the insurrection was "an attack by certainly not 300 men on the dwellings of Sir Alexander Burnes and Captain Johnson." The precise number of the rioters, at the commencement of the outbreak, is of little consequence. All are agreed in opinion as to the insignificance of the movement, and the facility with which it might have been suppressed. It seems probable that, as Mohun Lal says, there were only some thirty men there by previous concert, but that the number was swelled by accidental rioters, moved by the greed of plunder. To the evidence already adduced in the text, may be added that of Lalla Gungadeen, a hospital gomastah (or steward) attached to Captain Johnson's establishment, who says, "For three or four days, it was

The question, then—and it is one of the gravest that can be asked in the entire course of this historical inquiry—is, how came it that an insurrectionary movement, which might have been crushed at the outset by a handful of men, was suffered to grow into a great revolution? It is a question not to be answered hastily—not to be answered at all without the citation of all available evidence. It is fortunate that at least the facts of the case are to be ascertained with sufficient distinctness. It is certain that, on the first receipt of authentic intelligence of the outbreak in the city, Macnaghten repaired to Elphinstone's quarters to seek military aid. Shelton, in his narrative, says, that much valuable time was lost at the outset. "The Envoy," he writes, "must have had notice by 7 A.M., so that much valuable time was, I fear, lost by remaining quietly at home, receiving reports, instead of acting promptly and with decision."* But the imputation is not warranted by the real facts of the case. "On the morning of the 2nd of November"—such is the evidence of the Envoy himself—"I was informed that the town of Caubul was in a state of commotion; and shortly afterwards I received a note from Lieutenant-Colonel Sir A. Burnes, to the effect that his house was besieged, and begging for assistance. I immediately went to General Elphinstone."† General Elphinstone himself says: "On the 2nd of November, at half-past 7 A.M., I was told by

the general belief that there was no formidable foe to contend against—perhaps merely a small body, similar to a gang of *decoits*. If at this time an attack had been made upon the city, it would have been well. One 'pultun' would have been enough. The people were in great terror, and said every moment, 'They are coming—they are coming.'"—[*MS. Records.*]

* *Private Correspondence of Brigadier Shelton: near Caubul, May 28th.*—[*MS. Records.*]

† *Sir William Macnaghten's Report to the Secretary of Government. Left unfinished at his death.*—[*MS. Records.*]

Colonel Oliver that the city was in a great ferment, and shortly after the Envoy came and told me that it was in a state of insurrection, but that he did not think much of it, and that it would shortly subside."* Captain Johnson, too, writes that, on receiving in cantonments intelligence of the outbreak, he went to report what he had heard to Captain Lawrence, military secretary to the Envoy. "The latter," he adds, "had just received a note from Burnes on the subject, and was on the way to the General's." Thus it is established that Macnaghten lost no time in seeking the advice and assistance of the military commander.

Let us next see what was the result of the visit to the General. "I suggested," says Macnaghten, "that Brigadier Shelton's force should proceed to the Balla Hissar, thence to operate as might seem expedient; that the remaining troops should be concentrated in the cantonments, and placed in a state of defence, and assistance, if possible, sent to Sir A. Burnes. Before Brigadier Shelton could reach the Balla Hissar, the town had attained such a state of ferment that it was deemed impracticable to penetrate to Sir A. Burnes's residence, which was in the centre of the city."

General Elphinstone's report is meagre and unsatisfactory, and does not even allude to any supposed expediency of supporting Sir Alexander Burnes:—"It was proposed," he says, "that Brigadier Shelton, with two regiments and guns, should proceed to the Balla Hissar; and the Envoy sent his military secretary, Captain Lawrence, to intimate his wishes, and obtain the King's sanction to this measure, the Balla Hissar being considered a commanding position, and the fittest route to enter the city. . . . . The troops, horse artillery

* *Report of Major-General Elphinstone.*

(four guns), with a company of the 44th Foot, the Shah's 6th Infantry, and a wing of the 54th N. I., moved under Brigadier Shelton, about twelve o'clock, into the Balla Hissar; the rest of the troops were concentrated in cantonments, which arrangements occupied the rest of the day."

Brigadier Shelton's report is much more explicit and intelligible. It throws a flood of light on some of the dark places:—"On the morning of the 2nd November," says the Brigadier, "I passed under the city wall about seven o'clock, when the cavalry grass-cutters, who were in the habit of going through the town for their grass, told me that the city gate was shut, and that they could not get in. All was quiet at this time; and I rode home, thinking some robbery might have taken place, and that the gate might have been shut to prevent the escape of the thieves. About eight or nine o'clock various reports were in circulation, and between nine and ten I got a note from General Elphinstone, reporting a disturbance in the city, and desiring me to prepare to march into the Balla Hissar, with three companies 54th N. I., the Shah's 6th Infantry, and four guns, all I had in camp (the remainder of my brigade having been called into cantonments). I soon after got another, telling me not to go, as the King objected to it. I replied to this note, that if there was an insurrection in the city, it was not a moment for indecision, and recommended him at once to decide upon what measures he would adopt. The answer to this was, to march immediately into the Balla Hissar, where I would receive further instructions from the Envoy's military secretary, whom I should find there. Just as I was marching off, a note came from the latter person to halt for further orders. I then sent in the engineer officer to see the cause; but he was cut down by an Afghan, in dismounting from his horse, just outside the square, where

his Majesty was sitting. Soon after this the secretary himself came with orders to proceed. I then marched in, when the King asked me, as well as I could understand, who sent me, and what I came there for.*" He was not, indeed, allowed to operate upon the disturbed city. All that, circumstanced as he was, Shelton could do, was to cover the retreat of the Shah's Hindostanees, who had been sent out, as we have seen, against the insurgents, and been disastrously beaten.

It is obvious, therefore, that Brigadier Shelton must be acquitted of all blame. He recommended, on the morning of the 2nd of November, prompt and decisive measures, but he was not empowered to carry them into effect. The responsibitity rests with the Envoy and the General, and must be equally shared between them. It does not appear that either recognised the necessity of a prompt attack upon the disturbed quarter of the city. The Envoy, always considerate and humane—sometimes to a point of weakness—desired to spare the inhabitants of Caubul those dreadful scenes of plunder and violence which ever follow the incursion of a body of retributive troops into an offending city. But such tender mercies are often cruel. In such cases the most vigorous measures are commonly the most humane. It is hard to say how much human life would have been saved if, early on the 2nd of November, a few companies of infantry and a couple of guns had been despatched to that portion of the city where Sir Alexander Burnes and his companions were

* *Letter of Brigadier Shelton: May* 28, 1842.—[*MS. Records.*]—The engineer officer sent by Shelton to the Balla Hissar was Lieutenant Sturt, who had been despatched to the Brigadier's camp, at Seeah Sungh, with instructions from General Elphinstone, and arrived there about nine o'clock. So writes Lady Sale. Brigadier Shelton's report confirms the accuracy of that portion of Lady Sale's narrative—based, it is to be presumed, upon the information of Lieutenant Sturt.

standing at bay before a contemptible rabble, which would have melted away at the approach of a handful of regular troops.

Burnes did not believe the outbreak to be a formidable one; Macnaghten did not believe it to be a formidable one; and Elphinstone was entirely swayed by the opinions of his political associates. Hence came the indecision and inactivity, which were attended with such disastrous results. Burnes and Macnaghten were right up to a certain point; but all beyond was lamentably wrong. The outbreak was not formidable in itself; but it was certain, in such "ticklish times," * very soon to become formidable. There are seasons when slight indications of unrest, such as might commonly be disregarded, assume a portentous and alarming aspect, and demand all the vigilance and energy of the custodians of the public safety. Such a season had now arrived; the minds of the people were in a feverish, inflammable state, and it required very little to bring on a dangerous paroxysm of irrepressible violence and disorder. Macnaghten was unwilling to believe that the chiefs were connected with those October disturbances which had blocked up the passes between Caubul and Jellalabad, and thought that the Ghilzye rising was of a local, accidental character, with which the Caubulees had no connection, and in which they took no interest; but Brigadier Shelton has declared his conviction that the majority of the insurgents who took possession of the passes were sent out from the city, and that many of them passed through his camp at Seeah Sungh.†

Be this as it may, it is very certain that even an incidental outbreak in the city of Caubul ought not, at such

* See the expression of the Envoy, in a letter quoted in the Appendix.

† *Letter from Brigadier Shelton, May* 28, 1842.—[*MS. Records.*

a season, to have been regarded as a matter of light concern. But an attack upon the residence of a high political functionary could, in nowise, be looked upon as an incidental outrage, proceeding neither from political causes, nor conducing to political results. It was an emergency, indeed, that called for promptitude of action, unrestrained either by short-sighted considerations of humanity or feelings of official delicacy and reserve. Too anxious to conciliate the wishes of the King, the Envoy forbore from all aggressive measures until his Majesty had been consulted; and when he learnt that Campbell's regiment had been sent out against the insurgents, he believed that the insurrection would be speedily put down. But in such a crisis the British minister might have acted, without any breach of official rectitude, on his own independent judgment, and taken upon himself to decide at once what was best, not only for the King, whom English money and English arms were supporting on his throne, but for what was of infinitely more importance, the honour of the British nation.

It is not difficult to understand these restraining influences; but when all due allowance is made for them, it must still be admitted that at such a time, under such circumstances, nothing short of a prompt movement upon the disturbed quarter of the city should have been counselled by the Envoy and ordered by the General. There is nothing, indeed, but the impracticability of the movement that can be urged in extenuation of its neglect. The Envoy has declared that, by the time Brigadier Shelton had reached the Balla Hissar, it was impracticable for a body of troops to penetrate to the neighbourhood of Burnes's house. But what was impracticable then was not impracticable some time before; and Shelton would have reached the Balla Hissar much sooner, but for the respect shown to the wishes of the King, the delay in

ascertaining those wishes, and the vacillating orders which his Majesty thought fit to issue on this momentous occasion. The attack on the city should have been made some hours earlier in the day. The movement may have been impracticable after the hour when Shelton reached the Balla Hissar; but why was it not made *before?* The only point to be decided by the Envoy and the General was, what body of troops—whether from Shelton's camp or cantonments—could be most expeditiously despatched to the disturbed quarter of the town, and most effectually suppress the disturbance? But instead of directing all his thoughts to this one great object, the Envoy thought about the wishes of the Shah and the comforts of the people; whilst the General, too glad to be saved the trouble of thinking at all, readily adopted Macnaghten's opinions, and believed that the fires which had broken out in the city might be left to die out by themselves.

Still it must be remembered, on the other hand, that wise after the event, we are passing sentence on the conduct of men who had not then the full information which lights us to a more correct decision; and that if they had dragooned down the insurrection at the outset, destroying innocent life and valuable property, they would certainly, by one party at least, have been impeached as incapable and dangerous alarmists. It would not improbably have been said, that they had by a precipitancy, as mischievous as it was uncalled for, turned friends into enemies, confidence into mistrust, repose into irritation, and sown broadcast the seeds of future rebellion over the whole length and breadth of the land.

CHAPTER II.

[November, 1841.]

Progress of the Insurrection—Attempted Movement on the City—Attack on Mahomed Sheriff's Fort—Loss of the Commissariat Fort—Captain Mackenzie's Defence—Capture of Mahomed Sheriff's Fort—Attempts to corrupt the Enemy.

On this disastrous 2nd of November, the British authorities in the Caubul cantonments, instead of acting to-day, had, I have said, been talking about doing something to-morrow. That something was a conjoint movement from the cantonments and the Balla Hissar on the Lahore gate of the city. "We must see," wrote Elphinstone to Macnaghten, "what the morning brings, and then think what can be done." The morning was one of early bustle and activity throughout the British cantonment. Before day had broken, the drums beat to arms. Intelligence had come in that a large body of men were marching over the Seeah Sungh hills. They were believed to be enemies, but they proved to be friends. The 37 Regiment of Native Infantry had been called in from Koord-Caubul on the preceding day; and it had made good its march, in the face of no feeble opposition, bringing in its baggage and its sick in an orderly manner, very creditable to the commanding officer.* Two guns of the mountain-train accompanied the regiment. Any addition to the cantonment force was valuable at such a time; and the 37th

* Major Griffiths.

Regiment was regarded as one of the best in the service. Still, although when our resources were thus increased, a movement was made upon the city, so small a force was sent out that it was compelled to retreat.

The movement, such as it was—the first attempted by the British troops—was made three hours after noon. The enemy had by this time increased mightily in numbers. Thousands, long ripe for revolt, were now ready to declare themselves on the side of the national party. All the surrounding villages poured in their tributaries,* and swelled the great tide of insurrection. At noon, on the preceding day, the road between the cantonments and the city had been scarcely passable; and now all this intervening ground was alive with an angry enemy. In the face of a hostile multitude, it was little likely that a weak detachment could penetrate into the city. The party sent out on this hazardous service, under Major Swayne, consisted of one company of H. M.'s 44th Regiment, two companies of the 5th Native Infantry, and two horse artillery guns. The whole affair was a failure. The only fortunate circumstance was that this feeble detachment retired in good time. Owing to some misconception of orders, no party had been detached to co-operate with them from the Balla Hissar; and if they had forced their way to the Lahore gate of the city, the whole detachment would have been cut to pieces. As it was, the party was fired upon from the Kohistan gate, near which it ought not to have gone; † and it was soon only too obvious that

* "As soon," says Mohun Lal, in a letter to Mr. Colvin, "as the murder of Sir Alexander (whose name was awfully respected), and the pillage of treasure was known in the adjacent villages, it brought next day thousands of men under the standard of the rebels."—[*MS. Records.*]

† It would seem that the party, instead of taking the shortest and safest route to the Lahore gate, took the longest and the most dangerous.

a further advance, in the face of such an enemy, would be a profitless sacrifice of life. Major Swayne brought back his detachment, and so ended the first attempt to operate upon the city.

It is hard to say why a stronger force, with a fair allowance of cavalry, was not sent out in the first instance; or why, on the return of Swayne's weak detachment, it was not reinforced and sent out against the enemy. There was daylight enough left to do good execution with an adequate force, adequately commanded. But the evening of this day, like that of the preceding one, closed in upon an inactive and dispirited British force, and an undisciplined enemy emboldened by impunity and flushed with success.

The aspect of affairs now became more threatening. Before noon, on the preceding day, the Envoy and his family had vacated the Residency, and sought a more secure asylum within the walls of the cantonments. Now preparations were being made to place those cantonments in a state of defence. This was no easy matter. The works were of "frightful extent;" and demanded a much larger body of troops and greater number of guns, than were at the disposal of the General, to defend them even against the "contemptible enemy" that was now collecting around them. It was not long after the commencement of the outbreak, before Lieutenant Eyre, the ordnance commissariat officer, had placed every available gun in position. But the want of artillery in this conjuncture was soon lamentably apparent. There had, at no time, been a sufficiency of this important arm; but one portion of the miserable allowance was now with Sale's force, another in the Balla Hissar, and the wretched remnant was in cantonments.

It was impossible now any longer to close one's eyes against the real state of affairs. They were growing rapidly worse and worse. The Envoy sate down to his

desk and wrote importunate letters to Captain Macgregor, urging him to bring back Sir Robert Sale's force to Caubul. At the same time he wrote to Candahar, to arrest the march of the troops that were about to return to India, and to despatch them with all speed to his relief. Nothing came of these mandates but disappointment. It would have been better if the Caubul force had trusted wholly to itself.

The next day was one of more appalling disaster. It brought to light a new evil that threatened destruction to the beleagured force. The commissariat fort—the magazine in which all the stores, on which our troops depended for subsistence, were garnered up—was outside the cantonment walls. It was situated about 400 yards from the south-west bastion of the cantonment. On the preceding day, the detachment in charge of the fort had been raised to a subaltern's guard of eighty men. It was now threatened by the enemy. Another fort, still nearer cantonments, known as Mahomed Sheriff's Fort, was already in possession of a hostile garrison;* and the King's gardens, between which and the cantonments this fort was situated, were swarming with the insurgents. The communications between the British cantonments and the commissariat fort were thus intercepted by the enemy; and the position of the slender guard posted for the defence of the latter was therefore one of imminent peril. The enemy laid siege to the fort; and began to mine beneath the walls. Surrounded as he was by a far superior force, and seeing no possibility of repelling the assaults of the enemy, Lieutenant Warren, who commanded the guard, officially reported the danger of his

* General Elphinstone had, on the preceding day, expressed his desire to garrison this fort with our own troops; but Sir William Macnaghten declared that it would not be politic to do so.

position; and set forth that, unless reinforced, he should be obliged to abandon his post. The letter was conveyed to the General, who ordered out two companies of the 44th Regiment, under Captains Swayne and Robinson, to reinforce the party at the commissariat fort, or enable them to *evacuate* it in safety.* They had not proceeded far, when the enemy, posted in Mahomed Sheriff's Fort opened upon them with deadly execution. The galling fire of the concealed marksmen checked their progress. Captains Swayne and Robinson were shot dead. Other officers were wounded. There seemed to be no chance of success. To move onward would only have been to expose the detachment to certain destruction. The officer upon whom the command of the party had devolved, determined, therefore, to abandon an enterprise from which nothing but further disaster could arise. He brought back his party to cantonments; and so another failure was added to the list.

Another was soon to be recorded against us. In the course of the afternoon, the General determined to try the effect of sending out a party, consisting mainly of cavalry, to enable Lieutenant Warren to evacuate the commissariat fort. But this party suffered more severely than the preceding one. From the loopholes of Mahomed Sheriff's Fort—from every tree in the Shah's garden—from whatever cover of wood or masonry was to be found—the

* General Elphinstone speaks of this party as a reinforcement. He says: "On the 4th instant another attempt to throw in reinforcements failed. The troops employed suffered considerably, particularly the 5th Cavalry." Two different attempts are here mixed up together. Captain Johnson says, that the first was an attempt to reinforce Lieutenant Warren; but that the second, on which the 5th Cavalry were employed, was an attempt to bring off the commissariat guard. Lieutenant Eyre and Lady Sale speak of *both* movements in the light of efforts made to enable Lieutenant Warren to abandon his position. It is certain that the second was.

Afghan marksmen poured, with unerring aim, their deadly fire upon our advancing troops. The unseen enemy was too strong for our slight detachment. The troopers of the 5th Cavalry fell in numbers beneath the fire of the Afghan matchlocks. The forward movement was checked. The party retreated; and again the enemy gathered new courage from the contemplation of our reverses.

In the mean while, it had become known to the commissariat officers that the General contemplated the abandonment of the fort, in which not only our grain, but our hospital stores, our spirits, wine, beer, &c., were garnered. Dismayed at the thought of a sacrifice that must entail destruction on the entire force, Captain Boyd, the chief commissariat officer, hastened to General Elphinstone's quarters, and entreated him not to withdraw Lieutenant Warren from the fort, but to reinforce him with all possible despatch. The General, ever ready to listen to advice, and sometimes to take it, heard all that was advanced by the commissariat officer, readily assented to its truth, and promised to send out a reinforcement to the fort. But no reinforcement was sent. Night was closing in upon the cantonment, and Captain Boyd, to his bitter disappointment, perceived that no preparations were making for the promised movement towards the fort. Asking Captain Johnson to accompany him, he again proceeded to the General's quarters, where the two officers, in emphatic language, pointed out the terrible results of the sacrifice of our supplies. Again the General listened; again he assented; and again he would have promised all that was required; but other officers were present, who put forth other opinions; talked of the danger of the movement; urged that it would be necessary, in the first instance, to capture Mahomed's Sheriff's Fort; and so the General wavered. But at this juncture, another letter from Lieutenant Warren was brought in. It represented that

his position had become more insecure; that the enemy were mining under the walls, and the Sepoys escaping over them; and that if reinforcements were not speedily sent, he should be compelled to abandon his position.

This brought the General round again to the opinion that reinforcements ought to be sent; he promised that, soon after midnight a detachment should be under arms to take Mahomed Sheriff's Fort, and to strengthen Warren's position; and the requisite orders were accordingly issued. But later counsels prevailed. The march of the detachment was postponed to the following morning; and, before it moved, the little garrison had abandoned the fort and returned to cantonments, leaving all our supplies in the hands of the enemy, and inspiring them with fresh confidence and courage. Warren, a man of a reserved and taciturn nature, but of great courage and resolution, had done his best to defend the place; and had set an example of personal daring to his men, which ought to have inspired and invigorated them. On one occasion, amidst a deadly shower from the Afghan jezails, he had advanced alone, and torn down the national standard which the Afghans had planted at the gate of the fort. But the Sepoys had lost heart. It was impossible to continue the defence of the place. So the little party escaped by working a hole from the interior of the fort underneath the walls, by the aid of tools which had been sent them for a different purpose on the preceding night.*

Nor was this our only loss. The commissariat fort, in which the supplies for Shah Soojah's force were stored, was

* "Early on the morning of the 5th, the commissariat fort was abandoned by its garrison, the enemy having attempted to fire the gate and escalade. The garrison came out by a hole made from the interior—tools having been sent overnight, with a view to the introduction of reinforcements and the withdrawal of supplies from the store."—[*Report of General Elphinstone.*]

on the outskirts of the city. In 1840, when a general rising was deemed no unlikely occurrence, Captain Johnson laid in a supply of 17,000 maunds of attah for Shah Soojah's force, and had erected godowns for their reception within the Balla Hissar, where early in 1841 the grain was all laid up in store. The King, however, subsequently exercised the royal privilege of changing his mind. The godowns were inconveniently situated; and Captain Johnson was ordered to remove the grain from the citadel, and, having no better place for its reception, to convert his camel-sheds, on the outskirts of the city, into a godown fort.* In this fort, on the 2nd of November, there were about 8000 maunds of attah. Captain Mackenzie (who had then been for some months in charge of the executive commissariat of the Shah's troops), an officer of high character, greatly and deservedly esteemed by the Envoy and all the officers of the force, was at this time in charge of the fort. On the morning of the 2nd of November, it was attacked by the armed population of Deh-Afghan. Throughout the whole of that day Mackenzie held his post with unvarying constancy and unshaken courage. Everything was against the little garrison. Water was scarce; ammunition was scarce. They were encumbered with baggage, and overwhelmed with women and children. Reinforcements were written for in vain. Captain Trevor, who occupied, with his family, a neighbouring fort, despatched repeated letters to cantonments, importuning the Envoy to reinforce these isolated posts. But in vain they turned their straining eyes towards the cantonment, "looking for the glittering bayonets through the trees."†

* *Captain Johnson's MS. Journal.*

† Captain Mackenzie's narrative in *Eyre's Journal*; a very interesting and well-written report of one of the most honourable incidents of the war.

Not a company came to their relief. Instead of assistance they received nothing but melancholy tidings of disaster. A demonstration from the cantonment would have saved them. Captain Lawrence had volunteered to take two companies to the relief of the fort; but permission was denied to him. The Kuzzilbashes, too, were ready to declare themselves on the side of the British. Khan Sheeren Khan was, indeed, at Trevor's house. But when the chiefs saw that not an effort was made by the British commanders to vindicate our authority, or to save the lives of our officers, they prudently held aloof and refused to link themselves with a declining cause.

On the 3rd of November, "about the middle of the day," the enemy got possession of Trevor's house; and it soon became certain that Mackenzie, with all his gallantry and all his laborious zeal—working day and night without food and without rest—conducting the defence with as much judgment as spirit—could not much longer hold his post. His men were wearied out; his ammunition was exhausted; his wounded were dying for want of medical aid. He had defended his position throughout two days of toil, suffering, and danger; and no aid had come from cantonments—none was likely to come. So yielding at last to the importunity of others, he moved out of the fort, and fought his way, by night, to cantonments. It was a difficult and hazardous march; and, almost by a miracle, Mackenzie escaped to encounter new dangers, to sustain new trials, and to live in habitual gratitude to God for his wonderful preservation.

The abandonment of our commissariat stores not only threatened the British force with instant starvation, but made such a lamentable exposure of our imbecility, that all who had before held aloof, thinking that the British nation would arise and crush the insurgents, now gathered heart and openly declared themselves against us. The

doubtful were assured; the wavering were established. There was a British army looking over the walls of their cantonment at an ill-armed enemy—almost a rabble—gutting their commissariat fort. There were the spoliators, within four hundred yards of our position, carrying off our supplies, as busily as a swarm of ants. "The godown fort," wrote Captain Johnson in his journal, "was this day something similar to a large ants' nest. Ere noon, thousands and thousands had assembled from far and wide, to participate in the booty of the English dogs, each man taking away with him as much as he could carry—and to this we were all eye-witnesses." The troops were grievously indignant at the imbecility of their leaders, who had suffered them to be so ignominiously stripped of the very means of subsistence; and clamoured to be led out against the enemy, who were parading their spoils under the very walls of the cantonment.

The feeling was not one to be checked. Lieutenant Eyre went to the quarters of the General, urged him to send out a party for the capture of Mahomed Sheriff's Fort, and volunteered to keep the road clear for the advance of the storming party. With some reluctance the General assented, and wrote to the Envoy saying, that after due consideration he had determined on attacking the fort, with fifty men of the 44th, and 200 Native Infantry. "We will first try to breach the place," he added, "and shell it as well as we can. From information I have received respecting the interior of the fort, which I think is to be relied on, it seems the centre, like our old bazaar, is filled with buildings; therefore, if we succeed in blowing open the gate, we should only be exposed to a destructive fire from the buildings, which, from the state of preparation they evince, would no doubt be occupied in force, supported from the garden. Carrying powder-bags up under fire would have a chance of failure. Our men

have been all night in the works, are tired, and ill-fed; but we must hope for the best, and securing our commissariat fort with the stores." *

It was in this letter, written scarcely three days after the first outbreak of the insurrection, that the General first hinted at the necessity of treating with the insolent enemy. "It behoves us," he wrote, "to look to the consequences of failure: in this case I know not how we are to subsist, or, from want of provisions, to retreat. You should, therefore, consider what chance there is of making terms, if we are driven to this extremity. Shelton must then be withdrawn, as we shall not be able to supply him." What hope was there for the national honour after this? What but failure was likely to result from an expedition undertaken under such auspices? The party was sent out under Major Swayne. It seems to have stood still, when it ought to have rushed forward. The opportunity was lost; and the General, who was watching the movement from the gateway, ordered the detachment to be withdrawn. The Sepoys of the 37th regiment who had been eager to advance to the capture of the fort, were enraged and disappointed at being held back; and the enemy, more confident and presumptuous than before, exulted in a new triumph.

Whilst affairs were in this distressing and dispiriting state at Caubul, our outposts were exposed to imminent danger; and it was soon only too plain that the insurrection was not confined to the neighbourhood of the capital. At Kardurrah Lieutenant Maule, of the Bengal Artillery, commanding the Kohistanee regiment, with his adjutant and sergeant-major, had been cut to pieces at the outset of the insurrection, by the men of his own corps; and

* November 5, 1841. 5 A.M.—[*Unpublished Correspondence of General Elphinstone.*]

now intelligence came in that the Goorkha regiment, posted at Charekur in the Kohistan, where Eldred Pottinger was acting as Political Agent, was threatened with annihilation. Captain Codrington, the commandant, and other officers had been killed; and as water was failing the garrison, there was little chance of its holding out. The Envoy communicated these sad tidings to the General, who wrote in reply, that the intelligence was "most distressing;" and asked whether "nothing could be done by the promise of a large reward—a lakh of rupees for instance, if necessary, to any of the Kohistan chiefs," to bring off the little garrison.

This was written on the 6th of November. That day witnessed our first success. A party, under Major Griffiths, of the 37th Native Infantry, was sent out against Mahomed Sheriff's Fort. A practicable breach was effected, and the storming party entered with an irresistible impetuosity, worthy of British troops. Ensign Raban, of the 44th regiment, was shot dead on the crest of the breach. The garrison escaped to the hills, where a party of Anderson's horse dashed at them in gallant style, and drove them from their position. The rest of the day was spent in dubious skirmishing. All arms were employed in a wild desultory manner. Artillery, cavalry, and infantry did good independent service; but they did not support each other. Nothing great was designed or attempted. A general action might have been brought on; and, properly commanded at that time, the British troops, who were then eager to meet the enemy, might have beaten five times their numbers in the field. But General Elphinstone, long before this, had ceased to think of beating the enemy. Everything seemed possible to him but that.

We had lost our commissariat forts; but, happily, we had not lost our commissariat officers. As soon as it was perceived that our stores were in jeopardy, Captain Boyd

and Captain Johnson had begun to exert themselves, with an energy as praiseworthy as it was rare in that conjuncture, to collect supplies from the surrounding villages. They were more successful than under such circumstances could have been anticipated. The villagers sold the grain which they had laid up for their own winter supplies, at no very exorbitant rates, and the horrors of immediate starvation were averted from the beleagured force. The troops were put upon half-rations. The ordinary food of the native troops—the *attah*, or ground wheat—was wanting, for the water-mills in the villages had been destroyed; but the unbroken grain was served out to them in its stead.

A new danger was now to be discovered. The force had been threatened with starvation; but now supplies were coming in from the surrounding villages. It would have been impossible to hold out without provisions. It would be equally impossible to hold out without ammunition. As soon as the one danger was averted, the General began to look about for the approach of the other. On the 6th of November, he again wrote to Sir William Macnaghten, suggesting the expediency of making terms, with the least possible delay:—"We have temporarily," he said, "and I hope permanently, got over the difficulty of provisions. Our next consideration is ammunition; a very serious and indeed awful one. We have expended a great quantity; therefore it becomes worthy of thought on your part, how desirable it is that our operations should not be protracted by anything in treating that might tend to a continuance of the present state of things. Do not suppose from this I wish to recommend, or am advocating humiliating terms, or such as would reflect disgrace on us; but this fact of ammunition must not be lost sight of." And in a postscript to this letter are these melancholy words:—"Our case is not yet desperate; I do not

mean to impress that; but it must be borne in mind that it goes very fast." * The Envoy needed no better proof than this that our case, if not desperate, was "going very fast." There was an abundant supply of ammunition in store. But what hope was there, so long as the troops were thus commanded? There was no hope from our arms; but something might be done by our money. If the enemy could not be beaten off, he might be bought off. The Envoy, therefore, began to appeal to the cupidity of the chiefs.

The agent whom he employed was Mohun Lal. On the first outbreak in the city, the Moonshee had narrowly escaped destruction by taking refuge under the skirts of Mohamed Zemaun Khan.† Since that time he had resided in Caubul, under the protection of the Kuzzilbash chief Khan Shereen Khan, and had kept up a correspondence with Sir William Macnaghten, doing the Envoy's bidding, as he said, at the risk of his life. His first experiment was made upon the corruptibility of the Ghilzyes. At the request of the Envoy, Mohun Lal opened negotiations with the chiefs of the tribe, offering them two lakhs of rupees, with an immediate advance of a quarter of the amount; but before the contract was completed, the Envoy, doubtful, perhaps, of the sincerity of the chiefs, receded from the negotiation. The Ghilzyes were mortally offended; but the Envoy had another game in hand. On the 7th of November, he wrote to Mohun Lal, authorising him to assure our friends Khan Shereen Khan and

* *Unpublished Correspondence of General Elphinstone.*

† Mohun Lal says: "I had a very narrow escape, and was saved by taking a shelter under the garment of Mahomed Zemaun Khan in the street. Everything in my house (which I had saved in the course of my twelve years' service) was plundered, besides the murder of several servants belonging to Sir Alexander and myself."—[*Letter to Mr Colvin.—MS.*]

Mahomed Kumye, that if they performed the service which they had undertaken, the former should receive one lakh, and the latter 50,000 rupees, "besides getting the present, and everything else they require." "You may assure them," added Macnaghten, "that, whatever bluster the rebels may make, they will be beaten in the end. I hope that you will encourage Mohamed Yar Khan, the rival of Ameen-oollah; assure him that he shall receive the chiefship, and all the assistance necessary to enable him to support it. You may give promises in my name to the extent of 500,000 rupees (five lakhs)." *

Intelligence had by this time reached Caubul from many sources, to the effect that Mahomed Akbar Khan, the second son of Dost Mahomed, was coming in from Toorkistan, and had already advanced as far as Bameean; and Macnaghten had now begun to credit and to attach due importance to the news. Mohun Lal suggested the expediency of despatching an emissary to meet the Sirdar on the way, and offer him a handsome allowance to league himself with our party. To this the Envoy replied, that Mahomed Akbar's arrival at Bameean was likely enough; but that there could be little use in offering him a separate remittance, if the rebels had made already overtures to him.† He had more hope from the good offices of the Kuzzilbash chief and others on the spot, disposed to aid us, and he commended Mohun Lal for raising money to distribute among them. But he thought that, until assured of a good return, it would be better to scatter promises than coin; and so Mohun Lal was told not to advance more than 50,000 rupees until some service had been actually rendered.

But neither money actually spent, nor larger promises

* *Unpublished Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*

† November 8, 1842.—*Unpublished Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*

given, could really aid us in such an extremity. There were too many hungry appetites to appease—too many conflicting interests to reconcile; it was altogether, by this time, too mighty a movement to be put down by a display of the money-bags. The jingling of the coin could not drown the voice of an outraged and incensed people.

I wish that I had nothing more to say of the efforts made, out of the fair field of open battle, to destroy the power of the insurgent chiefs. There is a darker page of history yet to be written. This Mohun Lal had other work entrusted to him than that spoken of in these letters. He was not directed merely to appeal to the cupidity of the chiefs, by offering them large sums of money to exert their influence in our favour. He was directed, also, to offer rewards for the heads of the principal insurgents. As early as the 5th of November, Lieutenant John Conolly, who was in attendance upon Shah Soojah in the Balla Hissar, wrote thus to Mohun Lal:

Tell the Kuzzilbash chiefs, Shereen Khan, Naib Sheriff, in fact, all the chiefs of Sheeah persuasion, to join against the rebels. You can promise one lakh of rupees to Khan Shereen on the condition of his killing and seizing the rebels and arming all the Sheeahs, and immediately attacking all rebels. This is the time for the Sheeahs to do good service. Explain to them that, if the Soonees once get the upper hand in the town, they will immediately attack and plunder their part of the town; hold out promises of reward and money; write to me very frequently. Tell the chiefs who are well disposed, to send respectable agents to the Envoy. Try and spread "nifak" among the rebels. In everything that you do consult me, and write very often. Meer Hyder Purja-Bashi has been sent to Khan Shereen, and will see you.

And in a postscript to this letter appeared the ominous words: "I promise 10,000 rupees for the head of each of the principal rebel chiefs."

Mohun Lal received this letter, and being ready for

any kind of service not in the field, began to cast about in his mind the best means of accomplishing the object spoken of in Conolly's postscript, with the least danger to himself and the greatest benefit to his employers. It was necessary, however, to tread cautiously in so delicate a matter. The Moonshee was not yet assured of the temper of the Kuzzilbash chief; and the game might be played away by one precipitate move. So he resolved to keep the offer of the head-money in abeyance for a few days, and to watch the course of events.

CHAPTER III.

[November, 1841.]

Progress of the Insurrection—General Elphinstone—His Infirmities—Recall of Brigadier Shelton to Cantonments—Capture of the Rickabashee Fort—Intrigues with the Afghan Chiefs—The Envoy's Correspondence with Mohun Lal.

THE insurrection had now been raging for a week. The enemy had increased in numbers and in daring. The troops in the British cantonments were dispirited and disheartened. The General had begun to talk and to write about negotiation. The Envoy was attempting to buy off the enemy. Nothing had yet been done to avert the disastrous and disgraceful catastrophe which now threatened to crown our misfortunes. It was plain that something must be done. Any change would be a change for the better.

The officers, who served under General Elphinstone throughout this unhappy crisis, have invariably spoken of him with tenderness and respect. He was an honourable gentleman—a kind-hearted man; and he had once been a good soldier. His personal courage has never been questioned. Regardless of danger and patient under trial, he exposed himself without reserve, and bore his sufferings without complaining. But disease had broken down his physical strength, and enfeebled his understanding. He had almost lost the use of his limbs. He could not walk; he could hardly ride. The gout had crippled him in a manner that it was painful to contemplate. You could

not see him engaged in the most ordinary concerns of peaceful life without an emotion of lively compassion. He was fit only for the invalid establishment on the day of his arrival in India. It was a mockery to talk of his commanding a division of the army in the quietest district of Hindostan. But he was selected by Lord Auckland, against the advice of the Commander-in-Chief and the remonstrances of the Agra governor, to assume the command of that division of the army which of all others was most likely to be actively employed, and which demanded, therefore, the greatest amount of energy and activity in its commander. Among the general officers of the Indian army were many able and energetic men, with active limbs and clear understandings. There was one—a cripple, whose mental vigour much suffering had enfeebled; and *he* was selected by the Governor-General to command the army in Afghanistan.

Ever since his arrival at the head quarters at Caubul he had been, in his own words, "unlucky in the state of his health." From the beginning of May to the beginning of October he had been suffering, with little intermission, from fever and rheumatic gout. Sometimes he had been confined wholly to his couch; at others he was enabled to go abroad in a palanquin. During one or two brief intervals he had sufficiently recovered his strength to trust himself on the back of a horse. He was in the enjoyment of one of these intervals—but expecting every day to relinquish a burden which he was so ill able to bear*—when on the 2nd of November, whilst inspecting the guards, he "had a very severe fall—the horse falling upon him,"† and he was compelled to return to his

* He had sent in a medical certificate some time before, and received permission to return to Hindostan. He was to have accompanied the Envoy.

† *Memorandum found among the effects of the late Major-General Elphinstone, C.B., in his own hand-writing.*

quarters. From that time, though he never spared himself, it was painfully obvious that the Caubul army was without a chief. The General was perplexed—bewildered. He was utterly without resources of his own. A crisis had come upon him, demanding all the energies of a robust constitution and a vigorous understanding; and it had found him with a frame almost paralysed by disease, and a mind quite clouded by suffering. He had little knowledge of the political condition of Afghanistan, of the feelings of the people, of the language they spoke, or the country they inhabited. He was compelled, therefore, to rely upon the information of others, and to seek the advice of those with whom he was associated. So circumstanced, the ablest and most confident general would have been guided by the counsels of the British Envoy. But General Elphinstone was guided by every man's counsels—generally by the last speaker's—by captains and subalterns, by any one who had a plan to propose or any kind of advice to offer. He was, therefore, in a constant state of oscillation; now inclining to one opinion, now to another; now determining upon a course of action, now abandoning it; the resolutions of one hour giving way before the doubts of its successor, until, in the midst of these vacillations, the time to strike passed away for ever, and the loss was not to be retrieved.

In such a conjuncture, there could have been no greater calamity than the feeble indecision of the military commander. Promptitude of action was the one thing demanded by the exigences of the occasion; but instead of promptitude of action, there was nothing but hesitation and incertitude; long delays and small doings, worse than nothing; paltry demonstrations, looking as though they were expressly designed as revelations of the lamentable weakness of our arms, and the more lamentable imbecility of our counsels. To the Envoy all this was miserably

apparent. It was apparent to the whole garrison. It was not possible altogether to supersede the General. He was willing, with all his incompetency, to serve his country, and there was no authority in Afghanistan to remove him from his command. But something, it was thought, might be done by associating with him, in the command of the cantonment force, an officer of a more robust frame and more energetic character. Brigadier Shelton was known to be an active and a gallant soldier. Macnaghten counselled his recall from the Balla Hissar, and the General believing, or perhaps only hoping, that he would find a willing coadjutor in the Brigadier, despatched a note to him with instructions to come into cantonments.

Taking with him only a regiment of the Shah's troops and a single gun, the Brigadier quitted the Balla Hissar on the morning of the 9th of November, and made his way, without any interruption, to the cantonment, in broad daylight. The garrison welcomed him with cordiality. He came amongst them almost as a deliverer. Great things were expected from him. He was beloved neither by officers nor by men; but he was held to possess some sturdy qualities, and never to shrink from fighting. Little or nothing was known of his aptitude as a leader. He had seldom or never been placed in a position of responsible command. But the time for weighing nice questions of generalship had long ago passed away. The garrison were content to look for a commander to lead them against the enemy, with sufficient promptitude and in sufficient numbers to protect them against the certainty of failure. But a week of almost unbroken disaster had dispirited and enfeebled them. Everything that Shelton saw and heard was of a nature to discourage him. Anxious faces were around him, and desponding words saluted his ears. He went round the cantonments, and saw at once how large a force it required to defend such extensive works, and how

small a body of troops could be spared for external operations. Everything, indeed, was against him. He had not been sent for, until a series of disasters had crippled our means of defence, emboldened the enemy, disheartened the garrison, and brought the grim shadow of starvation close to the cantonment walls.*

But there was another evil soon to become only too painfully apparent. Brigadier Shelton had been sent for to co-operate with the General; but it was manifest that there was never likely to be any co-operation between them. Each has left upon record his opinion of the conduct of the other. The General says that the Brigadier was contumacious and insubordinate. The Brigadier says that he was thwarted in all his efforts to do good service —that he could not even place a gun in position without being reminded by the General that he had no independent command. Upon whomsoever the greater amount

* "About four o'clock on the morning of the 9th," says Brigadier Shelton, "I got a note from Elphinstone calling me into cantonments, desiring me to take the Shah's 6th Infantry and a 6-pounder gun with me. I left the Balla Hissar between six and seven, and marched in broad daylight without the enemy attempting to dispute my passage. I was all prepared for opposition had any been made. I was cordially received, but could read anxiety in every countenance, and they had then only three days' provisions. I was sorry to find desponding conversations and remarks too generally indulged, and was more grieved to find the troops were dispirited. Never having been much in cantonments, I went round and found them of frightful extent—the two sides of the oblong, including the two mission compounds, about 1400 yards each, the two ends each 500, with a rampart and ditch an Afghan could run over with the facility of a cat, with many other serious defects. The misfortune of this was that so many troops were necessary for the actual defence of the works, that only a few could be spared for external operations. I was put in orders to command cantonments, and consequently, in course of my inspections, gave such orders and instructions as appeared to me necessary. This, however, Elphinstone soon corrected, by reminding me that he commanded, not I."—[*Statement of Brigadier Shelton.—MS. Records.*]

of blame may rest, the result was sufficiently deplorable. The military chiefs never acted in concert.* Shelton was a man of a hard uncompromising nature, and it is probable that he had little toleration for the indecision of the general, and was little inclined to regard with tender ness and compassion the infirmities of the poor old chief. He did what he was commanded to do, if not with much military skill, at all events with an unflinching gallantry, to which the general himself bore willing testimony.† But from the absence of a right understanding between them a fatality attended almost every enterprise. Hesitation and delay at the outset—then vacillation and contradiction—resolutions taken and then abandoned—orders

* "On the 9th," says General Elphinstone, in the memorandum which I have before quoted, "not finding myself equal to the duties, particularly at night, when I could not go about on horseback, I recalled Brigadier Shelton from the Balla Hissar, but I regret to be obliged to disclose that I did not receive from him that cordial cooperation and advice I had a right to expect; on the contrary, his manner was most contumacious; from the day of his arrival he never gave me information or advice, but invariably found fault with all that was done, and canvassed and condemned all orders before officers, frequently preventing and delaying carrying them into effect. This and many other instances of want of assistance I can corroborate by the evidence of several officers still living. Had I been so fortunate as to have had Sir Robert Sale, than whom I never met any officer more disposed to do everything for the public service [ ]. I wish I could say the same of Brigadier Shelton,—he appeared to be actuated by an ill-feeling towards me. I did everything in my power to remain on terms with him. I was unlucky also in not understanding the state of things, and being wholly dependent on the Envoy and others for information."—[*MS. Records.*]

† In a public letter to the Secretary to Government written by General Elphinstone from Badeeabad, on February 23d, 1842, he says, "I beg to be allowed to express my sense of the gallant manner in which the various detachments sent out were led by Brigadier Shelton, and of the invariably noble conduct of the officers on these occasions." I am not aware whether this letter has been published. I have never seen it in print.

issued and then countermanded—so irritated the Brigadier, that his temper, never of a very genial cast, was generally in a somewhat tempestuous state before he took the field at the head of his men. How far we may rightly attribute to this the want of success which attended the Brigadier's operations can only now be conjectured; but it is very certain that in all of them the daring of the soldier was more conspicuous than the judgment of the commander.

In the meanwhile the Envoy was anxiously looking for the return of Sale's brigade from Gundamuck. He doubted the possibility of their being beset by any serious difficulties. He had written to Mohun Lal on the 8th, cautioning him not to place any reliance on the story about Gundamuck, for Sale's force, he said, was "too strong to be resisted by any force that the rebels could bring against them." And on the following day he despatched another letter to Captain Macgregor, urging him to send back the troops to the relief of our beleaguered position. Only a fragment of this letter has been preserved; but it sufficiently indicates the Envoy's opinion of the melancholy, almost desperate, state to which our affairs had even then attained. "I have written to you several letters," said Macnaghten, "urging you in the strongest manner to come up with Sale's brigade to our relief, but I fear you may not have received them. Our situation is rather a desperate one unless you arrive, because we can neither retreat in any direction, nor leave the cantonments to go into the Balla Hissar; but if we had your force we should be able to take the city, and thus preserve both the cantonment and Balla Hissar. The enemy is a contemptible one." * From the return of Sale's brigade alone

* *MS. Records.* On the 10th of November, Captain Macgregor received the first official intelligence of the outbreak, in a letter from Sir William Macnaghten, urging him to bring back the brigade to

did the Envoy look for any permanent change in the condition of affairs at Caubul. But from that quarter no assistance could come. The force was moving in another direction.

But whatever might be the chance of permanent improvement in the condition of affairs, it was still necessary to do something for the moment. On the morning of the 10th of November, the enemy mustered in great numbers —horse and foot—on the heights commanding the cantonment, sending up shouts of insolent defiance and firing *feux de joie*. There were some small forts on the plain below, perilously near our cantonment walls, and in these the enemy presently posted themselves, and grievously harassed our soldiers on the works. One of these, known as the Ricka-bashee Fort, situated near the north-east angle of the cantonment, was within musket-shot of our walls. It was easy to pour in thence a galling fire upon the troops manning our works; and the artillerymen at the guns were shot down by the deadly aim of the Afghan marksmen, concealed in the ruins of some adjacent houses. This was not to be endured. It is hard to believe that, whilst his men were being shot down before his eyes by hidden marksmen, the military chief could have needed much prompting to send out a party for the capture of the fort that so commanded our position. But it was only on the urgent representation of the Envoy that an expedition against the Ricka-bashee Fort was undertaken at last. There was a fine manly spirit—there were some good, true soldierly qualities, in Macnaghten; and he told the military commander that he did not shrink from responsibility—that, in such a case as this, he would take it all upon himself, but that at any risk the fort must be carried.

Caubul.—[*Captain Macgregor's Narrative.—MS. Records.*] This was of course, a previous letter.

Reluctantly the General consented; and a force under Brigadier Shelton, consisting of about two thousand men of all arms, was ordered to hold itself in readiness.* The force assembled about the hour of noon. The Brigadier was making his dispositions for the attack, when it again occurred to the General that the expedition was a dangerous one (as though war were not always dangerous), and that it would be more prudent to abandon it. The aide-de-camp at his elbow asked him why, if such were his opinions, he did not countermand it at once. And so the expedition was countermanded; and the Brigadier returned "disgusted with such vacillation."†

The troops were brought back within the cantonment walls; and the Brigadier, overflowing with indignation, laid the case before the Envoy. Macnaghten was as eager as Shelton for the movement; and the scruples of the General were overruled. But time had now been lost. The enemy's position had been strengthened. The spirit of our troops had been damped—their forwardness had been checked. The expedition set out with diminished chances of success, and the result was a dubious victory.

The Ricka-bashee Fort was captured on that 10th of November, but in a disastrous and calamitous manner,

* Two horse-artillery guns, one mountain-train gun, Walker's Horse, her Majesty's 44th Foot, under Colonel Mackrell; the 37th Native Infantry, under Major Griffiths; the 6th Regiment of Shah's Force, under Captain Hopkins.—[*Eyre's Journal.*]

† "I was occupied," says Brigadier Shelton, "in telling off the force, about 10 A.M., when I heard Elphinstone say to his aide-de-camp, 'I think we had better give it up.' The latter replied, 'Then why not countermand it at once?'—which was done, and I returned, as you may conceive, disgusted with such vacillation. About two hours after he again consented to attack it."—[*Statement of Brigadier Shelton: MS. Records.*]—Eyre says that the force assembled, not at 10, but at 12 A.M.; and as Brigadier Shelton's statement was written from memory, it is less likely to be correct in such small matters as these. The point is of little consequence.

which made the victory look more like a defeat. It was determined to blow open the gate with powder-bags, and Captain Bellew, the Assistant Quartermaster-General, gallantly volunteered to undertake the work of destruction. But, by some accident, instead of blowing open the main gate, he blew open a small wicket. Two companies of European and four companies of Native troops* had been told off to form the storming party; and Colonel Mackrell, of the 44th, was ordered to command it. The men, gallantly commanded, advanced with spirit to the attack; but they could with difficulty make their way through the narrow aperture, and the enemy, as they struggled forward, poured upon them a hot and destructive fire. Colonel Mackrell and Lieutenant Bird forced their way, with a few soldiers, into the fort. Captain Westmacott was shot down outside the aperture, and Captain Macrae sabred in the entrance. The few who made good their way into the interior of the fort struck a panic into the garrison, who, believing that the whole party were following them, fled in dismay out of the opposite gate. But the storming party, unhappily at this time, were checked by a charge of Afghan horse. The cry of "Cavalry" seems to have paralysed the British musketeers, who wavered, turned, and were soon in disastrous flight—Europeans and Sepoys together. In vain their officers endeavoured to urge them on to the attack—in vain they pleaded the desperate condition of those who had already entered, if they were not speedily supported. One man—a private of the 44th, named Stewart—alone volunteered to follow them. It was not easy to rally the fugitives. Confusion and dismay had seized them, and for some time they were deaf to every appeal. But they were commanded by one who at least

* H.M.'s 44th, the 37th N.I., and Shah Soojah's 6th Infantry.

was a brave soldier. Brigadier Shelton was a man of iron nerves and dauntless courage. Where the fire was the hottest he stood unshaken by the danger that assailed him, and shamed the disordered crowd of men, no longer soldiers. The example of the one-armed veteran did more than his exhortations. The broken bands rallied, re-formed, and advanced to the attack. But again they gave way to the Afghan horse; and again Shelton's expostulations and example brought the waverers back to their duty. The heavy guns from the cantonments were by this time playing upon the Afghan cavalry; the impetuosity of the enemy was thus restrained, and Shelton led up his men to the capture of the fort.

In the meanwhile, the few brave men who had made good their entrance through the wicket were beset by the deadliest peril. Many of the garrison, discovering how small was the real number of their assailants, had returned with new courage to the fort. The devoted Englishmen had endeavoured to secure themselves by shutting the gate through which the garrison had escaped, and securing the chain with a bayonet. But the enemy had removed this slender obstacle, and rushed in upon the little storming party. Colonel Mackrell was found fearfully wounded and disfigured, and was carried into cantonments to die. Lieutenant Bird, with two Sepoys of the 37th N.I., sought refuge in a stable, which they barricaded and defended with a resolution that deserved and secured a crown of success. When the fort was carried by the British troops they were found, with exhausted ammunition, but alive and uninjured. Thirty of the enemy had been shot down by the gallant three.

On the fall of the Ricka-bashee Fort some small adjacent forts were abandoned by the enemy, and a quantity of grain fell into our hands, only to be lost again for want of proper measures to secure it. Before the day

closed, Shelton had threatened the enemy, who had collected in some force on the Seeah Sungh hills. The Horse Artillery guns opened with good effect, and the enemy retired towards the city; but no attempt seems to have been made, on our part, to bring on a general action. On this 10th of November, for the first time any considerable body of troops was brought into the field. The opportunity of making a decided impression was a good one; but it was not turned to good account. The whole affair was mismanaged. The spirit of the troops was damped at the outset by the vacillation of the General. A grievous error was committed in attempting, for want of information to be easily obtained, an entrance at the wrong point, into the Ricka-bashee Fort. Then the force sent out under Brigadier Shelton was lamentably weak in the mounted branch, although there was no want of cavalry in cantonments. Had the infantry been supported by a stronger body of horse, they would have had more confidence in themselves, and suffered less severely in the action. A strong reserve, too, should have been held in readiness for employment in the event of the party meeting with any check, or requiring any support. As it was, when the Afghan horse attacked our columns and threw them into confusion, there was nothing to give them any confidence but the gallantry of their leaders.

The result, however, of the capture of the forts, though the achievement was clouded by a melancholy loss of life, was more satisfactory than would be supposed from such a recital of the errors that attended it. The Envoy, indeed, subsequently declared that it averted the necessity of a disastrous retreat.* We had got posses-

* "We had only four or five days' supplies for the cantonment. The Balla Hissar as well as the cantonment was in a state of siege. We could not hope for provisions from thence, nor would the place

sion of some positions contiguous to the cantonment, the occupation of which by the enemy had grievously distressed our force. For two or three days after the capture the Afghans did little to annoy us. The commissariat officers took advantage of the opportunity to add to their available supplies;* and whilst they were endeavouring to buy grain, the Envoy was doing his best to buy the enemy. The negotiations with the Ghilzyes, which had been broken off, were resumed; and every possible effort was made to win over the chiefs to our cause, or to sow dissension among them. In all these operations he employed the agency of Mohun Lal. The hasty letters written to this individual best unfold the nature of these transactions. On the 11th of November he thus addressed the Moonshee: "You will observe from the enclosed letters that I have confirmed the promises made by you to the Ghilzye rebels; though had you known of our successes yesterday, the terms might have been more favourable for us. Humza Khan should come to me as soon as possible, and I will then talk to him about the case of Gool Mahomed. The money could not be paid until the conditions of the agreement are fulfilled, and we are perfectly certain of the fidelity

have afforded us either food or shelter, and, in the opinion of the military authorities, to return thither would have been attended with ruin. A disastrous retreat seemed the only alternative, but this necessity was averted by the attack, on the 10th ult., of a neighbouring fort, which had intermediately furnished us with a scanty supply of provisions, but which subsequently espoused the cause of the rebels."—[*Unfinished Report of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.—MS. Records.*]

* "*November* 11*th.*—About six hundred maunds of wheat, found in one of the forts yesterday, captured and brought into cantonments. *November* 12*th.*—Busily employed purchasing provisions. The fight of the 10th had a good effect in giving the villagers some confidence in bringing their stores for sale."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal. MS. Records.*]

of Humza and the chiefs. The chiefs should go at once and pay their respects to his Majesty. You should encourage the rival of Ameen-oollah Khan by all possible means. That scoundrel and Abdoollah Khan should be executed, if we could catch them." *

And again, writing two days afterwards, he said: "I have received your letter of this morning's date, and highly approve of all you have done. Let Golam Hussan and Abdool-Ruheem Khan undertake to come to the Zoolfikar Fort this morning, and Captain Trevor will be ready there to receive them. Captain Trevor will be in that fort night and day, for some time, to receive overtures from any person; and parties coming in should send a single messenger before them. Khan Shereen Khan is quite right not to leave the Chundawul for a day or two. Tell Naib Sheriff he may safely go security to the Ghilzyes for the payment of the money. When I see Humza Khan I will talk to him about the best plan for the Ghilzye chiefs to wait on his Majesty. You are aware that I would give a reward of 10,000 rupees for the apprehension of Ameen-oollah Khan and such of the Dourance rebel chiefs. If you could see some of the officers of the Hazirbash corps that is just come in with Mahomed Azeem Khan, and give them encouragement, it would be very desirable." †

If there had been any hope of rescuing our force from destruction by honest fighting in the field, the Envoy would not have resorted to such shifts as are indicated in these letters. But he had unhappily discovered that the military commanders had abandoned all hope of beating the enemy, and were thinking of making their way out of the thicket of danger that encompassed them

* *Unpublished Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*
† *Ib.*

by a path less honourable and less secure. Anxious above all things to escape the disgrace of an open capitulation, which would have humiliated us in the eyes of all the nations of the East, the Envoy exerted all his diplomatic skill to create disunion among our principal enemies—to buy off those whose cupidity was stronger than their hatred—and to offer a reward for the seizure of others.

All this was at least within the range of orthodox diplomacy. But in the meanwhile that other, darker agency, of which I reluctantly spoke at the close of my last chapter, was being brought into operation. On the 11th of November, John Conolly again wrote to Mohun Lal: "Why do you not write? What has become of Meer Hyder? Is he doing anything with Khan Shereen? You never told me whether you had written to Naib Humza. What do the rebels propose doing now? Have you not made any arrangements about the bodies of the murdered officers? Offer 2000 rupees to any one who will take them to cantonments, or 1000 to any one who will bury them. Has not Sir Alexander's body been found? Give my salaam to the Naib. If Khan Shereen is not inclined to do service, try other Kuzzilbash chiefs independently. Exert yourself. Write to me often, for the news of Kossids is not to be depended on. There is a man called Hadjee Ali, who might be induced by a bribe to try and bring in the heads of one or two of the *Mufsids*. Endeavour to let him know that 10,000 rupees will be given for each head, or even 15,000 rupees. I have sent to him two or three times."

Mohun Lal, having by this time disencumbered himself of some of his misgivings on the score of his own personal safety, seems to have set about the work entrusted to him with a zeal that must have abundantly satisfied his employers. Hadjee Ali, and another man

named Aga Mahomed Soudah, were the agents to whom he first offered the price of the blood of their unhappy countrymen. But the Moonshee, perplexed by doubts rather than burdened with scruples, did not see very clearly at first how the chiefs were to be taken off; so he wrote to the Envoy that "he could not find out by Lieutenant Conolly's notes how the rebels are to be assassinated, but the men now employed promise to go into their houses and cut off their heads when they may be without attendants."

The victims said to have been first marked for the assassin's knife were Abdoollah Khan and Meer Musjedee. They were known to have been the movers of the attack on Burnes's house; and were regarded, therefore, as the murderers of the officers who were massacred there on the morning of the outbreak. They were known, too, as the boldest and most unscrupulous of the insurgent chiefs. It seemed, therefore, an act alike of retribution and expediency to strike them down in the full flush of success—in the hey-day of their sanguinary career. There is no need in this chapter to endeavour to penetrate the mist of painful obscurity that envelopes the disappearance of the two chiefs. It will be time to discuss the subject when I come to record their deaths.

CHAPTER IV.

[November—1841.]

Action on the Beh-meru Hills—Looked-for Advent of Sale's Brigade—Arrival of Pottinger—The Siege of Charekur—Destruction of the Goorkha Regiment—Withdrawal of Sale to Jellalabad—Question of Concentration in the Balla Hissar.—Bearing of the King—The Action on the 23rd of November—Negotiations.

On the 13th of November the enemy occupied, in great strength, the Beh-meru hills. They had planted two guns in a commanding position, and were cannonading the British cantonment. It was at once apparent to the Envoy that to leave them unmolested to fire into our works would be miserably to confess our own weakness, and to encourage the enemy in the continuance of a course of aggression which might end in the loss of our post. But it was difficult to persuade the military authorities to send out a force to dislodge them. Captain Lawrence was despatched, in the first instance, to the General; but the message he bore was coldly received, and he returned discouraged to the Envoy, with a recommendation that he should prefer his request in person. Macnaghten went. But the military chiefs were in no mood to listen to his counsel. The pliant General would soon have yielded; but the more dogmatic and self-confident Brigadier was ready with a host of objections, and a great array of difficulties, to overwhelm the arguments of the Envoy. Macnaghten, however, was peremptory. The guns, he said, must be taken at all risks, and at once, or

the loss of cantonments to-morrow might be the result of our supineness to-day. There was again a talk of responsibility. The Envoy took the responsibility on himself, and a strong detachment, with two guns, under Brigadier Shelton,* was ordered out for service.

But much time had been lost in these idle discussions. It was nearly four o'clock before the troops were ready to take the field. They moved out in three columns, and taking different directions, pushed forward with a spirit and a rapidity worthy of British troops, to the foot of the hill. One, the most serviceable of the two guns that had been sent out under Lieutenant Eyre, unfortunately stuck fast, for some time, in a canal. But the advanced body of the infantry, under the General's aide-de-camp, Major Thain, were eager to move forward before the guns, thus delayed, could be brought to bear upon the enemy's position. Only one round of grape had been fired when they closed with the enemy. It would have been well had the insurgents been compelled to listen more to that argument which takes no denial; for the musketry fire of our detachment, though poured in at a distance of only ten yards, scarcely took effect upon the insurgents. The men took no aim—fired wildly—anywhere but in the right direction. Emboldened by impunity, the Afghan cavalry charged down upon the British bayonets with irresistible force. No dispositions were made to receive them. For a while all was panic and confusion. Friend

* It consisted of two squadrons of the 5th Light Cavalry, under Colonel Chambers; one squadron of Shah Soojah's 2nd Irregular Horse, under Lieutenant Le Geyt; one troop of Skinner's Horse, under Lieutenant Walker; the Body Guard; six companies of her Majesty's 44th, under Major Scott; six companies of the 37th Native Infantry, under Major Griffiths; four companies of the Shah's 6th Infantry, under Captain Hopkins; one horse-artillery and one mountain-train gun, under Lieutenant Eyre, escorted by a company of the Shah's 6th Regiment, under Captain Marshall.

and foe were mixed up together, as the column gave way, and the horsemen charged through and through our ranks until the rout was complete.* It was only a temporary check. The British troops retreated down the slope; but rallied, re-formed behind the reserve at the foot of the hill, and, under cover of the guns which Eyre was now working with good effect, advanced again to the attack. Anderson's Horse now came into action, and making a gallant charge, drove the enemy up the ascent. The infantry followed, and carried the height, whilst the enemy, escaping along the ridge, abandoned their guns to the victors.

Night was now closing in upon the scene. The detachment had been sent out to capture the enemy's guns. The guns were in our possession; but it would have been the mere shadow of a victory if they had not been carried off. The Envoy, who had watched the struggle with painful anxiety, despatched a message of earnest entreaty that no effort should be spared "to complete the triumph of the day,"† by bringing both the guns into cantonments. One of the deserted guns was easily removed by a party of the Shah's 6th Infantry; but some Afghan marksmen were pouring in so warm a fire upon the other and larger piece, that the British soldier—all his character reversed—seeing the danger and not the honour of the exploit, shrunk from the perilous service, and refused to advance for the capture of the gun.‡ It was nearly dark. The further detention of the force would

* "My very heart," said Lady Sale, "felt as if it leapt to my teeth when I saw the Afghans ride clean through them. The onset was fearful. They looked like a great cluster of bees, but we beat them and drove them up again."

† *Eyre's Journal.*

‡ "Major Scott, of her Majesty's 44th, repeatedly called on his men to descend with him to drag the six-pounder away, but, strange

have been attended with serious risk. Eyre, therefore, spiked the gun, which it seemed impossible to carry off, and then secured the capture of the other. The six-pounder was rolled down the hill; the four-pounder was carried into cantonments.

It was eight o'clock before Shelton's force returned to their quarters. The enemy intercepted their movements, and threatened the cantonment, but the attack was repulsed by a few rounds of grape, and a brisk fire from Mackenzie's jezailchees. Many, on both sides, had fallen during the action of the afternoon. Major Thain and Captain Paton were severely wounded. All night, from the hill-side, came loud lamentations—the wailings of the relatives of the Afghans who had fallen in the fight. Lights were flitting about in every direction; for they were burying the dead. On the following day they were busy with the same melancholy work.

This affair of the 13th of November was set down as a success; and it was wise to make the most of it. It was the last success, even of a doubtful and equivocal character, which the unhappy force was destined to achieve. "Henceforward," wrote one who has chronicled with no common fidelity the events of these miserable months,* "it becomes my weary task to relate a catalogue of errors, disasters, and difficulties, which, following close upon each other, disgusted our officers, disheartened our soldiers, and finally sunk us all into irretrievable ruin, as though Heaven itself, by a combination of evil circumstances, for its own inscrutable purposes, had planned our downfal."

For some days the enemy remained comparatively in-

to say, his frequent appeals to their soldierly feelings were made in vain; with a few gallant exceptions, they remained immoveable, nor could the Sepoys be induced to lead the way where their European brethren so obstinately hung back."—[*Eyre's Journal.*]

* *Lieutenant Eyre.*

active. Occasional threatenings kept the garrison on the alert; but little was done to change the posture of affairs. The Envoy, still looking for the return of Sale's brigade, continued to write urgent letters to Captain Macgregor. On the 12th, he had written: "I have written to you four times, requesting that you would come up with Sale's brigade as soon as possible. We are still in a very bad way, though not quite so badly off as we were four days ago. Our force is so small that we cannot act on the offensive, and we have not above a fortnight's supplies. I am trying, through Humza, to enter into some arrangements with the *Mufsids*. As the Ghilzyes are occupied here, I should think you would not meet with much opposition, except, perhaps, in the Khoord Caubul Pass." And now again, on the 14th, he wrote (and it is plain from this letter that he thought the action of the preceding day had in nowise improved their condition): "Dozens of letters have been written from this, urging your immediate return with Sale's brigade to Caubul; and if you have not started by the time you receive this, I earnestly beg that you will do so immediately. Our situation is a very precarious one; but with your assistance we should all do well, and you must render it to us, if you have any regard for our lives or for the honour of our country. We may be said to be in a state of siege; and had we not made two desperate sallies, we should ere now have been annihilated. We have provisions for only ten days; but when you arrive we shall be able to command the resources of the country. In our action of yesterday Thain and Paton were wounded, the latter so severely that his arm has been amputated. I have still some hope of the Charekur detachment, but a faint one. I have no news from Ghuzni or Candahar. In the interior of the country they seem to be as *jaghee* as at the capital. Mehtur Moosa joined the rebels yesterday. We have

been unmolested to-day, but it may be only the lull before the storm. Humza Khan has promised to call on me this evening. I have no idea that he will do so. I intend to make much of him. I have written to you several letters of late, so shall say no more for the present. The Ghilzye force being here, I should conceive you will experience no opposition on the road."

The hopes expressed for the safety of the Charekur detachment were dissipated on the following day. On the 15th of November, Major Pottinger and Lieutenant Haughton came in wounded from that place, and reported that the Goorkha regiment had been cut to pieces. They had held out for some time with noble resolution; but their position was untenable for want of water. The horrors of unappeasable thirst had overcome them; they had been compelled to abandon their post; had attempted to make good their retreat to Caubul; and had perished by the way.

The story which Pottinger told must be briefly related. Before the end of October the Kohistanees and Nijrowees were in open revolt; and on the 1st of November, Meer Musjedee, with a strong insurgent force, moved across the plain of the Barakab and took up a position at Akserai, completely cutting off the communication between Charekur and Caubul.* Pottinger and Codrington now took counsel together. The former, as political agent on the Toorkistan frontier, resided in the castle of Lughmanee, about two miles distant from Charekur, where the Goorkha regiment was planted in

* "This step they ventured on in consequence of our want of cavalry, which prevented us from having patrols, and encouraged them to march above forty miles across a level plain, in no place twenty miles from our own post, and in some parts of the latter half approaching within eight miles."—[*Major Pottinger's Budeeabad Report.—MS. Records.*] Charekur is fifty or sixty miles to the north of Caubul.

some fortified barracks, the defences of which were still in course of construction. Codrington, who commanded the regiment, was, at the dawn of November, with Pottinger in the Lughmance castle. Their position was one of great difficulty. They sent out reconnoitring parties to obtain intelligence of the precise position of the enemy; but, encumbered as they were with women and children, and almost wholly without carriage, it seemed impossible that the Goorkha regiment could be moved out of Charekur. Pottinger wrote to the Envoy for troops, called upon all the friendly chiefs to aid him, and began to strengthen his position. But it was soon apparent that no help could come from Caubul, and that the friends on whom he relied were, in fact, disguised enemies. Many Kohistanee and Nijrowee chiefs visited him on the two first days of November. Loud in their expressions of friendship, they declared their willingness to co-operate with him for the suppression of the insurrection; but when he called upon them to attack the castles of the chiefs who had gone out to join the army of Meer Musjedee, it at once became apparent that they lied. The suspicions of Pottinger were aroused. The "friends" around him were assembling in such numbers as to form an army of their own; and Pottinger, determined as he was to betray neither suspicion nor alarm, could not help feeling that a sudden attack was by no means an improbable event to proceed out of all these armed gatherings.

On the morning of the 3rd, the numbers of armed men around the Residency had increased. The reconnoitring parties had not returned. The chiefs were asking for presents, but refusing to do the service required of them. Everything seemed enveloped in an atmosphere of doubt and suspicion; and Pottinger, as he received the chiefs, who came pressing in with offers of friendship, could not help feeling that a struggle was at hand.

Before noon, he received several of the more powerful chiefs at the Residency, and at noon went out to meet the petty Sirdars, who were clustering in the garden around his house. With characteristic Afghan cupidity, they assailed him with questions respecting the amount of the rewards that would be paid for their services. Pottinger entered into some explanations which the foremost of the party seemed disposed to consider satisfactory; but, expressing some doubts as to whether their clansmen would be satisfied, they requested that the nature of the overtures might be made known to those who were removed from the circle around the British Agent. Lieutenant Rattray, the Political Assistant, had just joined Pottinger in the garden. He was now requested to explain the matter to the rest, who were standing a little way apart. Accompanied by the principal chiefs, Rattray proceeded to the place where they were assembled, and, after some conversation, they quitted the garden, and repaired to "an adjoining stubble-field, where several parties of armed men were standing."

It was not long before Rattray became aware that treachery was brewing. He turned to leave the field, and was immediately shot down. Pottinger was still sitting in conversation with some of the chiefs, when a man attached to the Hazerbash regiment ran up, and by hints, rather than by intelligible words, apprised him of the danger that surrounded him. The sound of firing confirmed the ominous intelligence. The chiefs rose and fled. Pottinger escaped into the castle, and from the *terre-pleine* of the rampart looked down, and saw Rattray lying badly wounded on the ground, and "the recent tenderers of service making off in all directions with the plunder of the Hazerbash camp."*

* *Major Pottinger's Budeeabad Report.*

Rattray was soon despatched. A party of the enemy, crossing the plain and seeing the wounded officer at their mercy, discharged their pieces into his head and body. They then invested Pottinger's position, firing upon him from the shelter of the numerous water-courses and walls. But assistance was now at hand. Lieutenant Haughton, the adjutant of the Goorkha corps, was moving down from Charekur. As soon as he appeared in the vicinity of the garden. Captain Codrington made a sortie, and united himself with the relieving force. The enemy were driven out of the garden with severe loss. Evening was by this time closing in. The enemy had got possession of the Charekur road, and before any measures of future defence could be concerted between the two officers, Codrington was obliged, after leaving some details with Pottinger, to move off his Goorkhas to his own fortified barracks. On the following day, with four companies of Goorkhas, and a six-pounder gun, Codrington moved down from Charekur, to relieve Pottinger's guard, and to supply his little garrison with ammunition. Owing mainly, however, to the impetuosity of a company of young soldiers,* the column

* "When the party got in motion the enemy retreated on all sides. One very large body, however, remained in a position on the mountain side, threatening the flank of the column. Ensign Salisbury was detached with a company to remove this. The enemy retreated as they advanced, and the Goorkhas being young soldiers, having once got heated, followed with great eagerness, despite the frequently sounded recall; and on their finally stopping, the enemy perceived they were too far separated from the main body, and followed them up with a boldness which obliged Mr. Salisbury to make frequent halts. In consequence, Mr. Haughton was obliged to halt the convoy, and detach the greater part of his men, to extricate the compromised company. This halt encouraged the other parties of the enemy, who had retired, and they closed in from all sides in most formidable array (apparently not less than 4000 men). Mr. Haughton, however, maintained his ground till joined by Mr. Salisbury, when, seeing the hopelessness of making good his way, he retreated and gained the barracks in safety.

met with a check, and was compelled to fall back on Charekur. Ensign Salisbury was mortally wounded, and many men of the Goorkha regiment fell on the retreat.

Seeing little prospect now of being relieved, and finding his ammunition reduced to a few rounds in the pouches of his men, Pottinger determined, after nightfall, to attempt a retreat on Charekur. Disguising his intentions by collecting grain during the day, as for a protracted defence, he eluded the vigilance of the enemy, and disencumbering himself of his Afghan followers, and all whose fidelity there was any reason to suspect, he mustered the Hindostanees outside the postern, upon the pretext of making a sortie upon the enemy, and then marched for the barracks. Avoiding the main road, and skirting the edge of the mountain, the little party, under cover of the night, made good its retreat, and united itself with the main body of the Goorkha regiment at Charekur.*

A great number of men fell in the retreat, as they were obliged frequently to halt, formed in close order to resist the enemy's cavalry, which, being closely on them, was only kept in check by the gallantry of Mr. Haughton, who, with a few men and the gun, remained in the rear, and covered the retreat of the disheartened party. Mr. Salisbury was mortally wounded, and the trail of the field-gun gave way at the elevating screw just as they reached support."—[*Pottinger's Report.—MS. Records.*]

* "In the castle of Lughmanee," writes Pottinger, in his official report, "we abandoned the hostages from the Kohistan chiefs, two boxes of treasure, containing 10,000 rupees, and about sixty Afghan firelocks (confiscated from the deserters of the Kohistan corps), all my official records, Mr. Rattray's, Dr. Grant's, and my own personal property, and a very large number of horses belonging to ourselves and the horsemen who had not deserted. The Heratees and seven or eight Peshawerees were the only Afghans who adhered to me. All the Caubulees deserted, and one principal cause of so immediate a termination to my defence may be traced to the reduction of a portion of my escort, which had so disgusted the men who remained, that they deserted as soon as Mr. Rattray was killed."—[*MS. Records.*]

On the morning of the 5th of November the enemy assembled in large bodies around the fortified barracks; and, after attacking the outposts, closely invested the place. Codrington commanded the regiment. Pottinger, divesting himself of his political character, became the artillery officer again, and took charge of the guns. Moving out with a field-piece to support the skirmishers, he was wounded by a musket-shot in the leg. But there was too much work in hand for one of his temper to succumb at once to such an accident as this. The enemy were pressing fiercely on. Codrington and his Goorkhas were confined to the barracks and a few mud huts in their immediate neighbourhood. They stood their ground manfully and well. But the hostile multitude poured like a torrent upon the little band of devoted men.* The Goorkhas were driven from the huts. They saw their gallant commander fall mortally wounded; but they returned undaunted to the attack. Haughton, the adjutant, was now at their head. He led the men gallantly to the charge, and drove back the enemy beyond the gardens they had occupied in the morning. Again and again the Afghans returned to the attack. But the little body of Goorkhas, with heroic courage, held their ground till night put an end to the conflict.

Amidst the tears and lamentations of his sepoys, Codrington, with his death-wound upon him, but still manfully striving to walk, had tottered, under support, to the cantonment, but had there fallen to the ground, and in an agony of thirst and calling for water, had then been carried into his house and placed on a bed, where now disabled by suffering, Eldred Pottinger was lying. Being

* Havildar Mootee Ram, of the Goorkha regiment, who gave a detailed account of the defence of Charekur, described this attack on their position by saying, "there were whole *beegahs* (acres) of gleaming swords moving towards us."

supplied with writing materials, he wrote, as best he could, a letter to his wife, gave her picture into Pottinger's safe keeping, and prepared himself to die. He lingered for two days, and then was laid in the grave by his faithful followers, beside one of his young companions in arms.

Meanwhile the unequal contest had continued. At a distance of some three hundred yards from the barracks there was a castle, the towers of which so effectually commanded them, that it was necessary to occupy the post with a garrison of fifty men. But it was not very easy to retain it. The enemy increased greatly in numbers on the 6th; and, in spite of the successful sorties of the Goorkhas, drove back their outposts, and confined them within the narrow limits of their barracks. On the following day, the castle garrison, betrayed by the regimental Moonshee, were induced to surrender. The enemy took possession of the place, and from its commanding towers poured in a galling fire on the Goorkhas in the barracks. The position of the little garrison was now becoming more and more critical. Cut off by the enemy, water had become lamentably scarce. They had lost half their officers and a large number of their comrades. The enemy had increased in number and in fury, and completely commanded their position. To shut themselves up in their barracks was to die of thirst; to attempt to fight their way out was to be cut to pieces.

On the 8th, the enemy offered them terms. The condition was, that they should become Mahomedans. "We came to this country," said Pottinger, in reply, "to aid a Mahomedan sovereign in the recovery of his rights. We are therefore within the pale of Islam, and exempt from coercion on the score of religion." To this they replied, that the King himself had ordered the attack; and asked if Pottinger would surrender on receiving his Majesty's orders. "I can do nothing," said Pottinger, "without a

written order from the King." And with this the negotiations ended.

But there was an enemy more terrible than these infuriated crowds of Kohistanees and Nijrowees. The garrison was suffering agonies of thirst.* On the 10th, the last pool of water was drawn; and half a wine-glass of the precious fluid was served out to each fighting man. On the 11th there was not sufficient to serve out to the whole party. At night they stole out with their *lotahs* concealed under their clothes, lest the shining metal should betray them, to snatch a few drops of water from a neighbouring spring. But the enemy discovered the practice, and shot down the wretched men. Parties were then sent out to cover the water-carriers; but the soldiers, mad with the tortures of thirst, quitted their ranks, and could not be restrained from rushing forward in search of the liquid life for which they had so long been languishing. Every new effort to obtain water, however well devised, failed from the same cause. The parties, which moved out as disciplined soldiers, soon, in the madness of their sufferings, became a disorderly rabble—soon were at the mercy of the enemy, who shot them down, in their helplessness, like sheep.

All hope was now at an end. The garrison were reduced to a party of two hundred fighting men. They

* "Some sheep were given to us by the officers; we found relief from sucking the raw flesh, and some of the men placed the contents of the stomach of the sheep in cloths, and, ringing them very hard, obtained some moisture to assuage their raging thirst. The sick and wounded now increased to a frightful amount, and were continually screaming for water in piercing accents. Our muskets were so foul from incessant use, that the balls were forced down with difficulty, although separated from the paper of the cartridge which usually wraps them round. The lips of the men became swollen and bloody, and their tongues clave to their palates."—[*Evidence of Mootee Ram, Havildar.*]

had but thirty rounds of ammunition for each musket in store. The wretched Goorkhas were literally perishing with intolerable thirst. Pottinger and Haughton took counsel together; and determined to make a desperate effort to save the remnant of their little force by a rapid unencumbered march to Caubul. Accordingly, on the evening of the 13th of November, the Goorkhas evacuated Charekur. Pottinger led the advance. Haughton had, on the afternoon of that day, been disabled by a sabre-cut from a jamadar of artillery, whilst apprehending a party of deserters; and was now scarcely able to sit his horse. Mr. Grant, a medical officer—not the first medical officer who has played the part of the true soldier in battle, and justified the claims of his profession to the soldier's honours and rewards—having spiked all the guns with his own hands, led out the main body; whilst Ensign Rose brought up the rear. The order of march was soon lost. The little force became a disorderly rabble, struggling on with the one object of allaying at the first pool of water the torments of unendurable thirst. It was impossible to keep them together—impossible to lead them in safety to the capital. Pottinger and Haughton were exhausted by the pain of their wounds. They could render no service to their men; and would have perished had they remained behind. So they determined on pushing on to Caubul. A single sepoy of the Goorkha corps, who plodded on with weary feet beside the horsemen, Pottinger's English writer, and the regimental *bunyah*, were their only companions. The route was unknown to them, and they had no guide; but they struggled on through many difficulties and much danger, and at last reached the neighbourhood of Caubul. Here the peril thickened around them. Descending into the Caubul plain behind the lake, and intending to cross the cultivated ground to the cantonments, at the back of the Shah's

garden, at Killa Bolundee, they missed the turning, and soon found themselves in the midst of the enemy's sentinels. Fearing to attract attention by turning back, they then made for Deh-Afghan, but finding the place occupied by the enemy, and being closely challenged by the sentries, they were compelled to pass into the city. Pursuing the lanes and bazaars along the river bank, and narrowly escaping death from a volley fired upon them by one of the enemy's picquets, they made their way at last to the cantonments. The regiment in the mean while had perished. Rose and Grant were slain by the enemy,* and scarcely a man escaped to tell how his comrades had been miserably destroyed.†

The intelligence brought in by Pottinger from the Kohistan was not of a nature to rouse the drooping spirits of the Envoy. Charekur had been lost; the Goorkha regiment annihilated; and there were now large bodies of Kohistanees and Nijrowees, having done their bloody work at home, ready to join the insurgents at the capital. With eager anxiety had Macnaghten

* Major Pottinger does not mention in his report when and how these officers fell. Lieutenant Melville, in his narrative, says: "From all that can be gathered from the reports brought in, it appears that the devoted corps had struggled on to Kardurrah, gallantly headed by Ensign Rose and Dr. Grant, where it was cut to pieces. The former officer fell, having first killed four of the enemy with his own hand; and the latter, although he contrived to escape from the murderous hands at Kardurrah, yet just as he had arrived in the sight of the haven of his hopes, within three miles of the cantonments, was massacred by some wood-cutters."

† This account of the defence of Charekur and the destruction of the Goorkha corps, is taken from Major Pottinger's Badeenbad Report (MS.). Eyre seems to have had access to it. I have learnt since the original edition of this book was published, that Captain Colin Mackenzie, with characteristic self-devotion, offered to proceed, with 200 horse to Charekur, and convey ammunition to Pottinger. This aid might have saved the Goorkha corps.

been looking for the return of Sale's brigade from Gundamuck, and now he learnt, to his bitter disappointment, that it had marched for Jellalabad. Still he did not despair of being able to recall it. "We learn, to our dismay," he wrote to Macgregor on the 17th of November, "that you have proceeded to Jellalabad. Our situation is a desperate one if you do not immediately return to our relief, and I beg that you will do so without a moment's delay. We have now been besieged for fourteen days, and without your assistance are utterly unable to carry on any offensive operations. You may easily make Caubul in eight marches, and, as the Ghilzyes are here, you would not have many enemies to contend with." *

In the course of the night he received a letter from Macgregor, which satisfied him that there was no longer any hope of receiving aid from Sale's brigade. He had begun to think by this time of the provisions of the tripartite treaty, and to look for aid from the Sikhs. "We are *in statu quo*," he wrote to the same correspondent on the following morning. "Our chief want is supplies. I perceive now that you could not well have joined us. I hope you have written to Mackeson, asking him for aid from the Sikhs under the treaty. If there is any difficulty about the Sikhs getting through the pass, Mackeson should offer a bribe to the Khyburees of a lakh of rupees, or more, to send them safe passage. These are not times to stick at trifles. . . . It is raining here, and the weather is very cold; but I am not sure that this is not as bad for the enemy as for ourselves. I do not hear anything from Ghuzni or Candahar, but I should not wonder if they were in the same mess as ourselves. We must look for support chiefly from Peshawur. Write to Mackeson continually, and tell him to urge government

* *Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*—[*MS. Records.*]

to send as many troops into the country as speedily as possible. John Conolly is in the Balla Hissar with his Majesty, who, as you may imagine, is in a sad taking about all the Fussad. I am making no progress in my negotiations with the rebels." *

The abandonment of all hope of assistance from Sale's brigade had now given a new complexion to the aspect of affairs. The military authorities, who had been long ripe for capitulation, now pressed the Envoy sorely with their "distressful accounts of the state of the troops and cattle from want of provisions," and of the "hopelessness of further resistance." † But Macnaghten, though he saw the necessity of weighing well the dangers that beset the force, and the means of extricating it from its perilous position, was not a man to grasp at the degradation of surrender whilst yet there was a hope of rescuing it by any more honourable course. The time had come, however, for him to declare fully his sentiments to the military commander; so, on the 18th of November, he addressed to him a letter, in which the whole question is thus reviewed, and which is too important in its

* *Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*—[*MS. Records.*] A version of this letter is given in the published papers; but there are some curious errors in the official text, which illustrate, in a very forcible manner, the value of these public documents as guides to historical truth. The private letter, in spite of its very unofficial style, is turned into an official one, commencing, "Sir."—The words, "the weather is very cold," are printed "the *water* is very cold;" and instead of "We must look for support chiefly from Peshawur," Macnaghten is made to say, "We must look for *supplies* chiefly from Peshawur." The evils of such carelessness as this have received a remarkable illustration in Major Hough's *Review of the Military Operations at Caubul*, in which are some pages of remark on the subject of *Supplies from Peshawur*, based upon this identical passage in the mis-copied or mis-printed letter.

† *Macnaghten's Unfinished Report to Government.*—[*MS. Records.*]

bearings upon our subsequent operations to warrant the omission of a line :*

Caubul, 18*th Nov.*, 1841.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

The intelligence received last night from Captain Macgregor makes it necessary that we should now take our future proceedings into consideration. We have scarcely a hope of reinforcement from Sale's brigade. I would recommend we hold on here as long as possible, and throughout the whole winter, if we can subsist the troops by any means, by making the Mahomedans and Christians live chiefly on flesh, and other contrivances. Here we have the essentials of wood and water in abundance, and I believe our position is impregnable.

A retreat in the direction of Jellalabad would be most disastrous, and should be avoided, except in the last extremity; we shall be better able to see, eight or ten days hence, whether that extremity must be resorted to. In that case, we should have to sacrifice the valuable property of government; we should have to sacrifice his Majesty, who would not come away without his family; and were we to make good our retreat to Jellalabad, we should find no shelter for the troops (the cantonments being destroyed), and perhaps no provisions. I fear, too, that in such a retreat very few of our camp followers would survive. I have frequently thought of negotiation, or rather capitulation, for such it would be, but in the present unsettled state of affairs there is no authority possessing sufficient weight to protect us all through the country; besides, we should hardly be justified, even for the security of our persons and property, to abandon even one position in the country. Another alternative would be for us to retire to the Balla Hissar; but this, I also fear, would be a disastrous retreat, and we should have to sacrifice a vast deal of property. We probably should not succeed in getting in our heavy guns, and they would be turned with effect by the enemy against the citadel. We should neither have food, nor firewood to cook it; for these essentials we should be dependent upon sorties into the city, in which, if we were beaten, we should of course be ruined.

Upon the whole, I think it best to hold on where we are as long as possible, in the hope that something may turn up in our favour.

† The substance of this letter is given very correctly in Eyre's journal.

It is possible that we may receive reinforcements from Candahar. Now that the cold weather is coming on, the enemy will disperse to their houses very soon, and there will only be left the rebel chiefs and their immediate followers. We should not, therefore, be molested during the winter: and though circumstances make it likely that we should be attacked soon if we are to be attacked at all, a victory on our side might change the whole aspect of affairs.

I was disposed to recommend that a decisive blow should be struck somewhere to retrieve our fortunes, and that Mahomed Khan's fort should be captured. But I have since had reason to believe no solid advantage, such as commanding the road to the Balla Hissar, would result therefrom; that possibly we might not be able to hold it; and, in short, that the benefit of the measure would not counterbalance the risk attending it.

In eight or ten days more, we shall be better able to judge whether there is any chance of an improvement in our position. and, if not, it will remain for the military authorities to decide whether it would be more prudent to attempt a retreat to Jellalabad, or to retire into the Balla Hissar. If we could only bring in sufficient provisions for the winter, I would on no account leave the cantonment. Yours, &c., &c.,

W. H. MACNAGHTEN.

Many and anxious, by this time, had been the discussions relative to the abandonment of the cantonment, and the concentration of the British troops in the Balla Hissar. The measure had been recommended by the engineer, Sturt, and others, very soon after the first outbreak of the insurrection. The Envoy had favoured it at an earlier as he did at a later, period of the siege; but he seems at this time to have been more than usually alive to the difficulties of the movement. The General had scarcely any opinion at all on the subject. But the Brigadier was resolutely opposed to it. His arguments were not very overwhelming—but they were overwhelmingly advanced; and he seems for some time to have borne down the better reason of all who supported the measure. No one in the whole force was more profoundly impressed

with a conviction of the disadvantages of the cantonment as a military position than Brigadier Shelton himself. He has left on record, in emphatic language, his opinions upon this point; but he could see in the extreme insecurity of the cantonment an argument only for a discreditable retreat. He could not see that if the extent of the cantonment-works were such as to render their defence difficult, and external operations on a large scale impossible, there was in this circumstance abundant reason for the removal of the force to a position cursed with none of these annihilating evils.

In the Balla Hissar the troops would have been free from molestation. They would not, as in cantonments, have been harassed and dispirited by the necessity of manning works exposed at every point to the attacks of the enemy. They could have sallied out from such a position in large bodies—have attacked the city and the neighbouring forts—have obtained supplies from the surrounding country—and held their own till the coming spring. But against all this it was alleged that the removal of the force from the cantonment to the Balla Hissar would be a hazardous operation—that it could not be accomplished without great loss, including, in all probability, the entire sacrifice of the sick and wounded. That the movement would not have been free from danger is true. What movement could be free from danger, at such a time?—what warlike operations ever are free from danger? But that it would have necessarily involved the total sacrifice of the sick and wounded, is only to be assumed upon the hypothesis, that the curse which had so long brooded over us would still have worked for our own undoing, and that, therefore, no precautions would have been taken to protect them.*

* Eyre says, that "though to carry the sick would be *difficult*, it still was not *impossible*; for so short a distance two or even three men

Other arguments against the movement were also adduced. It was said that there was a scarcity of firewood in the Balla Hissar; and that there was no forage for the horses. But to this it was replied that there was a sufficiency of wood for purposes of cooking, that more might be obtained by sallies into the city, and that the improved shelter and increased comforts of the troops in the Balla Hissar would, under the most unfavourable circumstances, compensate for the want of firing. With regard to the forage, it was replied, that, if the horses could not be fed, they might be shot; and that there was little need for the employment of cavalry in such a position as the Balla Hissar.

One other argument, brought forward perhaps to give respectability to the whole, was urged by Shelton and his supporters. It was said that the abandonment of the cantonments would have been an acknowledgment of defeat, and a triumph to our enemies. It is enough to say of this, that it was urged by men who were clamorous for an abandonment, not of one position, but of all our positions in Afghanistan, and a precipitate retreat from the country. In the one case there might have been a partial triumph; in the other there must have been a complete one.

And so, owing mainly to the pertinacity of Brigadier Shelton, the only measure which could have saved the British force from destruction, and the British name from degradation, was rejected in this conjuncture.

could be conveyed in one *doolie*: some might manage to walk, and the rest could be mounted on yaboos, or camels, at the top of their loads." He says, too, that "if we had occupied the Seeah Sungh hill with a strong party, placing guns there to sweep the plains on the cantonment side, the enemy could have done little to impede our march without risking a battle with our whole force in fair field, to which they were generally adverse, but which would, perhaps, have been the *best* mode for *us* of deciding the struggle."

The troops remained in cantonments, threatened by the enemy and disheartened by the ominous gloom of their own officers, only to sustain another and more crushing defeat; and then to sink into a state of utter inactivity and prostration, whilst the leaders of the enemy were being brought over to consent to terms of capitulation, humbling indeed to the pride of the proudest and most successful nation of the world.

Whilst the feebleness of the military commanders in cantonments had thus been playing away stake after stake, until every hope of redemption was past, the King, shut up in the Balla Hissar, had been watching the progress of events with the profoundest anxiety and alarm. His bearing was that of a man heartless and hopeless under a pressure of unanticipated misfortunes; but prostrate and imbecile as he was in this conjuncture, he could see plainly enough the prostration and imbecility of the British chiefs. When the commissariat fort fell into the hands of the insurgents, the great calamity rose up suddenly before the inmates of the Balla Hissar. From the summit of the palace the enemy might be seen throwing the plunder over the walls of the fort, to be carried off by their companions below. There was a general rush upwards to this commanding position to witness the humiliating sight. The King beheld it with deep emotion, and, painfully agitated, turned to the Wuzeer and said, "Surely the English are mad." *

Dejected as he was before, this crowning calamity sunk him into a state of still deeper dejection. Every report of the designs of the enemy, however incredible, filled him with new terror. It was said that the insurgents were running a mine from the Shor Bazaar

* *Lieutenant Melville's Narrative.*

under the very walls of the palace. Dreading an immediate explosion, he quitted his apartments, and took up his residence at the gate of the Harem, where, seated at a window commanding an extensive view of the cantonments and the surrounding country, he traced, through a telescope, the progress of the exciting events passing below. Day after day he sate at the same window, looking down, from morning to evening prayer, upon a scene which seldom yielded aught to comfort or reassure him. Shah Soojah had never been a courageous man; but he had always been a very proud one. That now, enfeebled and desponding, he should have clung to any support, turned anywhere for assistance, was not strange; but when they saw the pompous and arrogant monarch now so humbled and obsequious, laying aside all the environments of royalty, to which before he had clung with such pitiful tenacity, the English officers about him felt that the shock must have been great indeed so to revolutionise his whole nature. He made even the British subalterns sit beside him on chairs; conversed familiarly with them; enquired into their wants, and condescended to supply them. "If," said one who had good opportunities of narrowly watching the behaviour of the King at this time, "he is acting a part, he certainly performs it admirably!"

Other reports soon came in from the city, or started up in the Balla Hissar itself, still more to terrify the King. It was alleged that the Arabs in the fort were about to rise up in a body, to massacre the troops and to give the place over to the rebels. The King, who never withheld his belief from any story however improbable, seized the chief of the Arab tribe, and ordered that no women or children should be suffered to leave the fort. But women and children of all kinds were now clamouring for egress. Collecting in crowds before the Wuzeer'

house, they importuned him, with loud lamentations, to suffer them to depart. The Wuzeer appealed to the King, who strictly prohibiting the egress of any Arab families, suffered more than seven hundred other women and children to pass out of the fort. The English officers thought, that if all the Arabs and Afghans had been removed from the fort, and all the provisions secured for the use of the fighting men, the whole force might have been saved.

The stores in the Balla Hissar had been indented upon for the use of the cantonment force, and the available supplies having been thus reduced, the troops were put upon half rations. The departure, however, of Brigadier Shelton and his escort had diminished the number of the fighting men, and now, under Major Ewart, they consisted of little more than the 54th N. I., a portion of the Horse Artillery troop under Captain Nicoll, and some details of irregular troops. At the points most exposed to attack the components of the little garrison were posted, and, kept always on the alert by reports of some threatened movement of the enemy, were always ready to give them a warm reception.

The affair of the 13th of November struck a gleam of hope into the garrison of the Balla Hissar. It seemed as though new courage had been infused into the cantonment force; and, as though to second the invigorated efforts of their comrades, the artillerymen in the citadel now began to ply their batteries with increased activity. They shelled the city, and attempted to fire it with carcases; but the houses were not of a construction to be easily ignited, and the shelling produced little effect. The residence of Ameen-oollah Khan, in the city, was to be seen from the batteries; and the gunners, knowing the old man to be one of our deadliest enemies, singled it out as a mark, and poured their iron rain upon it. But the

chief removed himself and his family to another house; and the only slaughter was among the horses.

A crisis was now at hand in the fate of the cantonment force. The 23rd of November was one of the most eventful and the most disastrous in the history of the insurrection. On that day a battle was fought which ended in the disgraceful and calamitous defeat of the British troops. The enemy had been for some time making their appearance on the Beh-meru hill, and had repeatedly descended into the village, whence the British commissariat officers had been drawing supplies of grain. Irritated by the assistance which the villagers had rendered us, the insurgents had destroyed the houses, pillaged the inhabitants, and attacked our commissariat people when getting in their supplies. This was not to be endured. Again the Envoy counselled the despatch of a strong force to occupy the Beh-meru hill, and to dislodge the enemy from a position in which they were able to work us such grievous annoyance. Again the Brigadier objected. Urging that the troops were exhausted and dispirited by constant harassing duty on the ramparts, that they had been living upon half-rations of parched wheat, and were therefore physically as well as morally enfeebled, he protested against a movement which he said would have the effect of increasing the number of wounded and sick, without leading to any solid advantage. But these objections were overruled. On the 22nd a weak detachment had been sent out, under Major Swayne, but it had only added another to our list of failures. It was plain that something more must be done. A council of war was held that evening at the General's quarters, and it was determined, after much earnest discussion, on the special recommendation of the Envoy, that a strong force should be sent out before daybreak on the following morning, to occupy the Beh-

meru hills. Shelton recommended that at the same time an attack should be made on the village. It was urged that the enemy would abandon the village as soon as our troops occupied the hill. The Brigadier declared that the occupation of the hill would only make the enemy hold the village with greater pertinacity. Shelton's advice, however, was overruled. The force went out before daybreak,* took possession of the hill, and posted themselves on the north-eastern extremity, which overhung the village. With a fatuity only to be accounted for by the belief that the curse of God was upon those unhappy people, they had taken out a single gun. This gun was now placed in a position commanding an enclosure of the village, where the watch-fires gave out their bright tokens that numbers of the enemy were assembled. A shower of grape was presently poured in upon the bivouac. Starting up in confusion, the enemy gave back a volley from their jezails, but, abandoning the open space, sought the shelter of the houses and towers, and there exhausted their ammunition in a vain attempt to respond to our grape and musketry. Day dawned, and it was plain that the enemy were abandoning the village. A few, however, still remained; and it was determined to carry the place by assault. A storming party was told off, under Major Swayne; but the village was not carried. The detachment seems to have gone down only to be fired at, and, after half an hour of inactivity, was recalled by the Brigadier.

* The force consisted of five companies of her Majesty's 44th, under Captain Leighton; six companies of the 5th N.I., under Lieut.-Colonel Oliver; six companies of the 37th N.I., under Captain Kershaw, of the 13th; a squadron of the 5th Cavalry, under Captain Bott; a squadron of Irregular Horse, under Lieutenant Walker; 100 men of Anderson's Horse; one Horse Artillery gun, under Sergeant Mulhall; 100 Sappers, under Lieutenant Laing, of the 27th, N.I.

The movement of the British troops, even in the dim twilight of the early morning, had been observed from the city; and soon large bodies of the enemy were moving across the plain. Horsemen and footmen streamed out in thousands to give the Feringhees battle. The horsemen stretched across the plain; the footmen covered an opposite hill, and some reoccupied the village.

The fire from the enemy's hill, which was separated from that on which our own troops were posted only by a narrow gorge, soon became hot and galling. Leaving five companies at the extremity of the hill, immediately above the village, Shelton took the remainder of his force, with the one gun, over the gorge, to a position near the brow of that hill, on which the enemy were assembling in the greatest numbers. Here he formed his infantry into two squares, and massed his cavalry immediately in their rear. The one gun was nobly worked, and for a time, with terrible effect, told upon the Afghan multitudes, who had only a matchlock fire to give back in return. But thus nobly worked, round after round poured in as quickly as the piece could be loaded, it soon became unserviceable. The vent was so heated by the incessant firing, that the gunners were no longer able to serve it. Ammunition, too, was becoming scarce. What would not those resolute artillerymen have given for another gun? The firing ceased; and the British musketeers were then left to do their work alone. Little could they do, at such a time, against the far-reaching Afghan matchlocks. The enemy poured a destructive fire into our squares, but the muskets of our infantry could not reach the assailants. The two forces were at a distance from each other, which gave all the advantage to the Afghans, who shot down our men with ease, and laughed at the musket-balls, which never reached their position.

The nature of the country was altogether unfavourable

to the British troops. Between them and the brow of the hill there was some rising ground, which prevented Shelton from seeing the movements of the enemy on the side of the hill. But from the cantonment could be seen a party of Afghans crawling from the gorge up the hill-side, and rushing with sudden fury upon our infantry masses. The unexpected attack seems to have struck a panic into the heart of our troops, who turned and fled along the ridge like sheep. Shelton, who ever in the midst of danger stood with iron courage exposed to the thickest fire of the enemy, vainly called upon his men to charge. Not a man brought down his bayonet to the position which the English soldier burns to assume when he sees the enemy before him. The Afghans had planted a standard upon the hill, only some thirty yards from the British squares; and now an officer proclaimed a reward, equal in the eyes of the common Sepoy to a year's pay, to any one who would advance and take it. But not a man responded to the appeal. A great fear was upon them all. The officers stood up like brave men; and hurled stones at the advancing enemy.* But nothing seemed to infuse courage into our panic-struck troops. The enemy, emboldened by success, advanced in larger numbers, and rushed upon our single gun. Our cavalry, called upon to charge, refused to follow their officers. The artillerymen stood to their gun; two of them fell dead beside it; a third was desperately wounded; a fourth, when the enemy rushed upon it, clung to the carriage between the wheels, and miraculously escaped destruction. There, too, fell Lieutenant Laing, than whom there was not a braver soul in the field on that fatal day, waving his sword over the gun, cheering the men who were doing their duty, and

* The officers who so distinguished themselves were Captain Macintosh and Lieutenant Laing, who were killed; and Captains Mackenzie, Troup, and Leighton.

calling on the rest to follow their example. But the heroic courage of the officers was thrown away upon the men. The gun was lost, and our disheartened regiments were in confused and disastrous flight.

All, however, was not then lost. Shelton ordered the halt to be sounded. The flying regiments stopped and re-formed; then turning round, faced the enemy with a shout, and seemed ready to renew the conflict. But the Ghazees now shrunk from the British bayonets. They were few in numbers; and they saw, too, a party of Anderson's Horse coming to the charge. Taking the horses and limber with them, they abandoned the gun, and fled.

In the meanwhile the enemy's cavalry on the plain had been thrown into confusion by the fall of their leader—Abdoollah Khan, Achetzkye. How he fell, or at what moment, is not precisely known. It was generally believed that he was wounded by a shot from our gun—but there was a whisper, of doubtful credibility, to the effect that he had been struck down by the jezail of one of his own countrymen, who is said to have claimed a reward for the act. Be the history of his fall what it may, it discouraged and alarmed the Afghan cavalry on the plain. Seeing their leader carried from the field, they fled in confusion towards the city. Ignorant of the cause of their flight, the infantry began to follow them; and the excited lookers-on in cantonments now thought the day was ours. Macnaghten and Elphinstone were standing together on the ramparts watching the enemy as they streamed across the plain. The opportunity seemed a great one. To have sent out of cantonments a body of troops to pursue the flying enemy, and render their confusion complete, would have been to have secured a victory. The Envoy urged it upon the General; but the General said it was a wild scheme, and weakly negatived the worthy proposal.

At this moment, when the enemy were in flight, and our gun had been recaptured, Shelton might have brought back his force with credit to cantonments. But the opportunity was lost. The enemy returned to the field, recruited by new hordes whom they met emerging from the city; and soon the swelling multitude poured itself upon our battalions. The General had sent out new supplies of ammunition, with another limber and horses for the gun; and it was soon again in full operation, playing with murderous effect upon the masses of the enemy. But again the British muskets were found no match for the Afghan jezails. There were truer eyes and steadier hands, too, in the ranks of the enemy than in our own; and now with unerring aim the Afghan marksmen mowed down our men like grass. The artillery men were falling fast at their gun; and Shelton, thinking it insecure, withdrew it to a safer position. Emboldened by this, the enemy continued the attack with increased vigour; and again the British troops began to cower beneath the fire of their assailants.

For now was seen again that spectacle which had before struck terror into our ranks and scattered our fighting men like sheep. A party of the enemy, headed by a band of furious Ghazees, emerged from the gorge, and crawling up the hill suddenly burst upon our wavering battalions. The British troops had been losing heart before this; and now it needed little to extinguish the last remaining spark of courage that warmed them. At this inauspicious moment, Shelton, who had been over in the thickest of the fire, and who escaped by very miracle the balls which flew about the one-armed veteran, and struck him five times with no effect, fell back a few paces to order some more men to the front. Seeing the back of their commander turned towards the enemy, our front rank men gave way; and, in a minute, infantry

and cavalry were flying precipitately down the slope of the hill. The Afghan horse, seizing the opportunity, dashed upon our retreating force; and presently friend and foe were mixed up in inextricable confusion. The artillerymen alone were true to themselves and their country. Thinking only of the safety of their gun, they dashed down the steep descent and drove into the very midst of the Afghan horsemen. But they could not resist the multitudes that closed around them; and the gun, so nobly served and so nobly protected, fell a second time into the hands of the enemy.

The rout of the British force was complete.* In one confused mass of infantry and cavalry—of European and native soldiers—they fled to the cantonment walls. Elphinstone, who had watched the conflict from the ramparts, went out, infirm as he was, and strove, with all the energy of which, in his enfeebled state, he was master, to rally the fugitives. But they had lost themselves past recovery; they had forgotten that they were British soldiers. The whole force was now at the mercy of the Afghans. Had they swept on, the cantonments must have fallen before them. The enemy were so mixed up with our men, that the guns on the ramparts could not open upon them without destroying our retreating battalions. But the insurgents made no effort to follow up the advantage they had gained. One of the chiefs, Osman Khan, Barukzye, suddenly drew off his men,†

* The loss upon our side was severe. Four officers fell—namely, Colonel Oliver, Captains Mackintosh and Walker, and Lieutenant Laing. Six others were wounded.

† Lady Sale says: "Osman Khan was heard by our Sepoys to order his men not to fire on those who ran, but to spare them. A chief, probably the same, rode round Kershaw three times when he was compelled to run with his men; he waved his sword over his head, but never attempted to kill him; and Captain Trevor says his life was several times in the power of the enemy, but he was also spared."

and, in a short time, the whole force, after savagely mutilating the corpses of our slain, had withdrawn, with shouts of exultation to the city.

"This," says Brigadier Shelton, in his narrative of the events, in which he bore so conspicuous a part, "concluded all exterior operations."* Nothing more was to be done by fighting. A general gloom hung over the cantonment. The most sanguine now began to despond. The troops had not only lost all heart—they had lost all discipline. The link which bound them to their officers seemed to be broken. The privations to which they were exposed were great. Cold, hunger, and fatigue pressed upon them; and they had not strength to bear up against such a burden of woe. It was plain that no use could be made in the field of a force so feeble and dispirited. The time for action had passed. And so, when, on the day after this disastrous affair on the Beh-

* No small quantity of military criticism has been lavished upon this unfortunate action of the 23rd of November. Eyre's criticisms are well known; and their soundness has been acknowledged by almost every subsequent writer. Major Hough, however, says, with reference to Eyre's assertion that Shelton formed his infantry into squares on the Beh-meru hill, that the Brigadier assured him that he formed no squares at all, but only threw back his flanks *en potence*. Captain Evans, of the 44th, also assured him that there were no squares. Every other writer, however, makes a similar assertion relative to the squares on the Beh-meru hill. Of the atrocity of the single gun there is only one opinion. With regard to the general plan of operations, Lady Sale says: "The misfortunes of the day are mainly attributable to Shelton's bad generalship, in taking up so unfavourable a position after his fault in neglecting to surprise the village and occupy, which was the ostensible object of the force going out." But I have shown that it was not Shelton's fault that the village was not surprised. A simultaneous attack on the village and on the hill was the course recommended by the Brigadier; but he was overruled in council. He went into action feeling certain that the plan mapped out for him was a wrong one—and the battle was not fought the better for the feeling that he had been thwarted and opposed.

meru hill, the enemy began to destroy the bridge which General Elphinstone, a short time before, had thrown over the Caubul River, the military chiefs looked idly on, whilst this outrage was being perpetrated almost within musket-shot of our position.

There were only two courses now open to the doomed force; and the political and military chiefs began again to take counsel together. The question of concentration in the Balla Hissar was first revived and discussed between them. John Conolly, at the instance of the King, wrote urgently to Macnaghten, recommending the measure as the only one that could now secure the safety and the honour of the British troops. But the military authorities had set their faces against it, and the Envoy yielded his assent to their opinions against his own better judgment. After a personal interview, on the morning of the 24th of November, at which the subject had been discussed between them, General Elphinstone addressed the following letter to the Envoy, seeking Macnaghten's opinion and stating his own:

24th Nov., 1841.

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

With reference to our conversation this morning, I request you will let me know what are your views with respect to moving into the Balla Hissar as proposed to you, admitting the possibility of our holding out there. Our getting into it with our ammunition and numerous sick and wounded, amounting to near 700, would be attended with the greatest difficulty, if not be altogether impossible. The enemy, no doubt, in the greatest force would oppose us, which would oblige us to cover the operation with the greatest part of our troops, and thereby leave the cantonment without sufficient defence.

I am the more confirmed in my opinion of the difficulty of the operation from the harassed and dispirited state of our troops, now so much reduced in numbers, and failure would tend to our certain destruction. With our means, it would take some days to remove the ammunition and stores, during which the enemy would be

collecting a great number around us; our wounded would be increased, with diminished means of conveying them.

Would the Balla Hissar hold us with our followers, even after the sacrifice of our horses and cattle? I am told that water is already selling there at a high price, even with the present small garrison. We have, at best, barely twenty days' supplies, which, even if we could remove, we have little prospect of adding to at the Balla Hissar; a retreat from thence would be worse than from our present position, for after abandoning our horses and means of transport, our sick, wounded, and stores, would have to be left behind at the mercy of the enemy.

I have conferred with Brigadier Shelton, the second in command, and he concurs with me in the above opinion.

Yours, &c.,
W. K. ELPHINSTONE.*

To this letter the Envoy replied :

MY DEAR GENERAL,

In reply to your note just received, I beg to state my opinion that the move into the Balla Hissar would be attended with the greatest difficulty, and I do not see what advantage could accrue therefrom, although the disadvantages, as pointed out by you, are apparent in the event of our ultimate retreat. As to the mere question of room for our troops and followers, I do not imagine that we should feel much difficulty on that account.

Yours, &c., &c.,
W. H. MACNAGHTEN.†

The question of a movement into the Balla Hissar having been thus disposed of for the present, the Envoy turned his thoughts towards that other course, which had been so long pressed upon him by the military chief. He began to think of negotiating with the enemy. But that he might not, save in the last extremity, enter upon a line of conduct against which the manliness of his nature revolted, he addressed a letter to the General, asking, in

* *Correspondence of General Elphinstone.*—[*MS. Records.*]—The substance of this letter is given in Eyre's Journal.

† *Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*—[*MS. Records.*]

specific terms, whether he considered it possible any longer to maintain his position in the country. To this letter Elphinstone replied:

Caubul, 24th Nov., 1841.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day's date, calling for my opinion as to whether, in a military point of view, it is feasible any longer to maintain our position in this country.

In reply, I beg to state, that after having held our position here for upwards of three weeks in a state of siege, from the want of provisions and forage, the reduced state of our troops, the large number of wounded and sick, the difficulty of defending the extensive and ill situated cantonment we occupy, the near approach of winter, our communications cut off, no prospect of relief, and the whole country in arms against us, I am of opinion that it is not feasible any longer to maintain our position in this country, and that you ought to avail yourself of the offer to negotiate which has been made to you.

W. K. ELPHINSTONE.*

Upon the receipt of this letter the Envoy ceased to hesitate. The enemy had made pacific overtures to him, and he now believed that it was no longer his duty to refuse to listen to them. So he sent a message to the insurgent chiefs, intimating his willingness to receive a deputation from them, and to discuss the preliminaries of a treaty. The invitation was accepted. On the following day, Sultan Mahomed Khan, Barukzye, and Meerza Ahmed Ali, Kuzzilbash, made their appearance at the bridge. Nothing could have been more unassuming than the ambassadorial cortége. The deputies rode sorry horses, and were attended only by their grooms. Captain Lawrence and Captain Trevor were sent out to meet them. The conference lasted two hours. Sultan Mahomed Khan, whose tone was insolent and uncompromising, demanded terms such as the English

* *Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*—[*MS. Records.*]

officers could not listen to without disgrace. The deputies then asked to see Macnaghten, and the party moved to cantonments. In the guard-room at one of the gateways the Envoy received the Afghan ambassadors. The discussion was long and animated. Sultan Mahomed, still arrogant and offensive, trode down, as with the heel of the conqueror, all the pretensions of his opponents; and declared that, as the Afghans had beaten us in battle, they had a right to dictate terms of capitulation. He demanded that the British should surrender at discretion, giving themselves up with all their arms, ammunition, and treasure, as prisoners of war. Macnaghten was not a man to submit to this dictation. The terms were resolutely rejected. "We shall meet, then," said Sultan Mahomed, "on the field of battle." "At all events," replied Macnaghten, "we shall meet at the day of judgment." And so the conference was brought to an end.

Then the Envoy sent them in writing a statement of the only terms on which he was prepared to treat. "I proposed to them," he subsequently recorded, "the only terms which, in my opinion, could be accepted with honour; but the temper of the rebels may best be understood when I mention that they returned me a letter of defiance the next morning, to the effect that unless I consented to surrender our arms and abandon his Majesty to his fate, we must prepare for immediate hostilities. To this I replied, that we preferred death to dishonour, and that it would remain with a higher power to decide between us." *

Thus ended the first attempt to secure, by negotiation with the enemy, the safety of our discomfited troops.

* *Unfinished Report of Sir W. H. Macnaghten to the Supreme Government—found in his writing-desk after his death.—[MS. Records.*

Whilst this movement was in progress a strange sight might have been seen on the ramparts of the British cantonment. Over those low walls, misnamed defences, the European soldiers were conversing with their Afghan enemies. The Afghans, armed to the teeth, came clustering round the cantonments; many of our soldiers went out unarmed amongst them, and were to be seen familiarly shaking hands with those whom a day before they had met on the field of battle. The Afghans were giving vegetables * to the men of the 44th Regiment, and declaring that everything had been amicably settled between the two contending hosts.

* Principally cabbages. It was apprehended by some that the broad leaves might conceal bottles of spirit, wherewith it was designed to intoxicate the garrison previous to an attack on the cantonment; but they proved on examination to be very harmless cabbages after all.

CHAPTER V.

[November—December: 1841.]

Progress of Negotiation—Arrival of Mahomed Akbar Khan—His Character—Negotiations continued—Deaths of Meer Musjedee and Abdoollah Khan—Revival of Negotiations—The Draft Treaty.

A NEW actor now appeared upon the stage. The advent of Mahomed Akbar Khan had been for some time expected. He had arrived from Toorkistan early in October, and was known to have been hovering about Bameean, and seemingly watching the progress of events in the neighbourhood of the Afghan capital. How far he may have sown the seeds of insurrection among the Ghilzyes is not very clearly known, but it is probable that the influence he exercised at that time was rather of a passive then of an active kind. That his presence on the borders of Afghanistan encouraged his countrymen in their career of hostility is not to be doubted; but there is little or no evidence to connect him more palpably with the earlier movements of the insurrectionary war. Whatever may have been his participation in the events of October and November, his appearance at the capital was now hailed by the insurgents with every demonstration of delight. Salutes were fired in honour of his arrival, and the chiefs waited upon him as upon one henceforth to be recognised as their leader. He was known to be a man of high courage and energy; he had approved himself a good soldier in the field; and he was the favourite son of the old Barukzye ruler, who a year before had been condemned

to pine away the remainder of his life a captive in the provinces of Hindostan.

The arrival of the Sirdar was a great event. Both parties looked upon it as one that must exercise a mighty influence over the future destinies of the war. The insurgents, wanting a leader, saw in the son of Dost Mahomed one around whom they could rally, with confidence alike in his sincerity and his courage. He had the wrongs of an injured family to redress. He had a kingdom to regain. He had been an outcast and a fugitive during two years of suffering and danger, because it had pleased the British government to invade his father's dominions and to expel the *de facto* rulers of the country; and now he saw opening out before him a prospect of recovering the lost supremacy of the Barukzyes, and restoring his exiled father to the Balla Hissar. All the circumstances of his past life and his present position were such as to secure his loyalty to the national cause. His inner qualities, no less than his outer environments, were of a class to rivet his hostility to the British. He was a man of an eager, impetuous nature; susceptible of good and of bad impulses, but seldom otherwise than earnest and impulsive. His education had been neglected; in his youth he had been unrestrained, and now self-control—a virtue rarely exercised by an Afghan—was wholly foreign to the character of the man. He was, indeed, peculiarly demonstrative, and sudden in his demonstrations, passing rapidly from one mood to another—blown about by violent gusts of feeling, bitterly repenting to-day the excesses of yesterday, and rushing into new excesses to-morrow. His was one of those fiery temperaments—those bold, dashing characters—which, in times of popular commotion, ever place their possessor in the front rank. But in seasons of repose he was one of the most joyous and light-hearted of men; no man loved a joke better;

no man laughed more heartily, or seemed to look more cheerfully on the sunny side of life. They, who knew him before the British trode down the Barukzyes, spoke of him as a good-tempered, well-meaning young man, and little thought, when his large dark eyes were glowing with child-like eagerness, to have the full dimensions of his long spear introduced into his portrait; or his solid frame was shaking with laughter at some joke passed upon his uncomely *Meerza*, that he would soon become the chief actor in one of the bloodiest tragedies that has ever disgraced the history of the world.

Whilst the Afghans, with noisy demonstrations of delight, were welcoming the appearance of Akbar Khan, the British were slow to believe that his advent would deepen the embarrassments of their position. Early in November, Mohun Lal had suggested to Macnaghten the expediency of endeavouring to corrupt the Sirdar before his advance upon the capital; but the Envoy had received slightingly the proposal, and no overtures had been made to the son of Dost Mahomed before his arrival at the capital. It was believed that there was sufficient security for his forbearance in the fact that so many members of his family were prisoners in our hands; and in the game of negotiation, which was now to be carried on, it was calculated that the intervention of the Sirdar would facilitate rather than encumber our arrangements for the honourable evacuation of Afghanistan, and our safe return to the provinces which, in an evil hour, we had been so unhappily tempted to quit.

Akbar Khan appeared at Caubul; but he did not at once assume the direction of affairs. The Newab Mahomed Zemaun Khan, a cousin of the late Caubul chief, had been proclaimed King by the insurgents. All orders were sent forth in his name; and the "fatiha" was read for him in the mosques. He was a man of a humane and

honourable nature, polished manners, and affable address. His nephew, Osman Khan, who is described by the Envoy as "the most moderate and sensible man" of the insurgent party, was now employed to negotiate with the British minister, and several times passed, on this errand, between the cantonment and the city. But the terms still dictated by the enemy were such as Macnaghten could not honourably accept. Day followed day; and nothing effectual was done either in council or on the field. The enemy appeared on the hills commanding the cantonments and in the village of Beh-meru, now deserted and destroyed; and the guns in the British cantonments were playing all day long upon these points. But such distant interchanges produced no result; and in the meanwhile our provisions were rapidly dwindling down. Again starvation stared the garrison in the face. With laudable zeal and activity the commissariat officers exerted themselves to obtain grain from the surrounding country; but with equal zeal and activity the enemy were striving to frustrate their efforts. Akbar Khan himself had not been many days at Caubul before he began to see that to defeat our commissariat officers was to overcome our unhappy force. Threatening death to all who might be detected in supplying our troops with any description of food, he soon baffled the best efforts of Boyd and Johnson, and again brought the question of capitulation to a simple question of supplies.

But still sanguine and confident, whilst the clouds were gathering more and more thickly around him, Macnaghten saw the skies brightening over-head, and never doubted that before long the storm would roll itself away. The letters which he wrote at this time present a remarkable contrast to those written by General Elphinstone. Whilst the General was looking around him everywhere for whatever could be made to swell the mountain of difficulty and

danger that he kept so steadily before him, the Envoy was constantly arraying in the foreground every circumstance that could in any way contribute towards the chance of ultimate success. Whilst the General was discovering that "our position was becoming more and more critical," the Envoy was perceiving that "our prospects were brightening," and talking about "defying the whole of Afghanistan." On the 28th of November, General Elphinstone wrote to Sir William Macnaghten, commenting on the wants and sufferings of the troops, and asking what effect the death of Abdoollah Khan would have upon their prospects: "Between ourselves," he said, in conclusion, "I see nothing we can do but by negotiation, if such be offered, and which for the many difficulties we are surrounded with, I hope may be the case."

Very different from the tone of this desponding letter was the spirit which at this time animated the communications of the Envoy to Mohun Lal. But there are other points besides the sanguine temperament of Macnaghten which his letters to the Moonshee tend painfully to illustrate: "The intelligence you have sent me is very encouraging," he wrote on the 26th of November, "and I hope the *nifac* among the rebels will increase. Meer Musjedee's death will probably cause the dispersion of the rebels who have come from Nijrow. Humza Khan never sent any relatives of the Ghilzye chiefs to me. Tell everybody that I have no faith in Sultan Mahomed Khan, and that I only wished to try the sincerity of his employers." And again, on the 29th, he wrote, "We are well off for everything but supplies, and, *Inshalla*, we shall not be badly off for them. . . . The enemy appeared to-day in considerable numbers, but they did nothing, and I am sure they will never venture to attack our cantonment. If we had only provisions, which, with due exertions

ought to be obtained, we should be able to defy the whole of Afghanistan for any period. I am very sorry that the deputation from Humza did not make their appearance last night, and I am anxiously expecting accounts from you showing why they did not do so." On the following day the Envoy added a postscript to this letter, saying, "Our prospects are, I think, brightening, and if you can assist us in the way of supplies, we have nothing to fear. . . . . I would give any money to Humza and the Ghilzyes if I had any security that they would be our friends, give us supplies, and keep open the communications."

It will be gathered from these passages, as from others before quoted, that Macnaghten, employing Mohun Lal as his agent, was endeavouring to secure the assistance of different hostile tribes by bribing them with money and with promises. He knew that there is no stronger passion than avarice in an Afghan's breast. But he did not turn his knowledge to profitable account. Had it been possible to deal with the Afghans as one united body, and to have corrupted them, *en masse*, with a few lakhs of rupees, he might have bought the safety of the force. But to bribe one party was to raise the hopes of another; and the representative of each conflicting clan believed that the amount of money he would receive would be measured by the force of his antagonism. As soon, therefore, as it was known that the money-bags of the Feringhees were being opened, and that indulgences were being bought, every one, eager to clutch the largest possible amount of purchase-money, increased the pressure of his hostility and rose in his demands. And thus the very measures by which Macnaghten sought to extricate himself from his difficulties, only made them gather more menacingly around him.

It will be gathered also from these letters, that, before

the end of November, Abdoollah Khan and Meer Musjedee had both been removed by death, from the scene of their recent triumphs. General Elphinstone speaks of the death of the former; Sir William Macnaghten of the death of the latter. In the action of the 23rd of November, Abdoollah Khan had been carried wounded from the field of battle; but whether a shrapnel shot from Shelton's one gun, or a ball from an Afghan jezail, struck down the truculent chief, is a point of history which must ever remain, as now, enveloped in obscurity and doubt. The story runs, that one of the men who had been set upon the track of the doomed chiefs, declared that he shot down his victim from behind a wall; and promised that poison should complete the work which the bullet had but partially effected. Abdoollah Khan died before a week had expired;* and it is said that Abdool Aziz claimed the price of blood. But Mohun Lal did not feel assured that either the traitorous bullet or the poison of the claimant had done the work of death; and the reward was refused on the plea that it had been offered for the heads of the chiefs, and the head of Abdoollah Khan had not been brought to him.

How Meer Musjedee died is not very clearly known.† His disappearance from the scene on which he had acted

* It was generally believed in the cantonments that he had died from the effects of his wounds. Lady Sale says: "Abdoollah Khan's death has, it is said, created some confusion in the city. Whilst still living a report was spread of his decease; and, like Alexander, he mounted his horse and showed himself to his followers; but the exertion was too great for him, and he shortly after expired."—*See* Appendix.

† It was believed by the British that he had been poisoned. Lady Sale says: "Meer Musjedee is dead. Some say he has been poisoned; others, that he died in consequence of the wounds received last year in the Kohistan. A number of this chief's followers have gone off with the body to the Kohistan, there to attend his funeral obsequies."

so conspicuous a part, was sudden and unexpected. A man named Mahomed Oollah swore that he had suffocated the chief in his sleep, and claimed the reward of his service. But the reward, it is said, was refused upon the same plea as was urged in the other case. The assassins, disappointed of their blood-money, were not likely to undertake any future service of the same hazardous kind, or to maintain a very discreet silence about the past. If they were employed upon such service, it is strange that their silence was not secured by a scrupulous fulfilment of the engagement by which their suborners had placed their own credit and safety in their hands. It was a perilous game, indeed, to invite disclosures by exciting the anger and hostility of the agents employed in this miserable work.

There is much obscurity still enveloping all this portion of the history of the war in Afghanistan. It is certain that at the end of November, Meer Musjedee and Abdoollah Khan died under circumstances which have been regarded, and not unreasonably, as suspicious. It is scarcely less certain that Lieutenant John Conolly, the cousin and assistant of the Envoy, instigated Mohun Lal to offer rewards for the heads of certain of the insurgent chiefs, and that Meer Musjedee and Abdoollah Khan were especially marked as the first victims. John Conolly was at this time with Shah Soojah in the Balla Hissar, and Mohun Lal was in the house of the Kuzzilbash chief. The Envoy was in the cantonments. To what extent John Conolly acted under Macnaghten's instructions—whether he acted on his own authority, or was directed by Shah Soojah, is not very clearly known. That Conolly was in constant communication with the Envoy we have the authority of the latter for believing. "Throughout the rebellion," he wrote, in his official report, "I was in constant communication with the Shah through my assistant, Lieutenant J. B. Conolly, who was in attendance on his Majesty in

the Balla Hissar." It has been questioned, therefore, whether Conolly, being at this time in constant communication with the Envoy, was likely, in a matter of so much responsibility, to have acted without instructions from his chief. But, on the other hand, we have Macnaghten's specific declaration that it was never his object to encourage the assassination of the insurgents: "I am sorry," he wrote on the 1st of December to Mohun Lal, "to find from your letter of last night that you should have supposed it was ever my object to encourage assassination. The rebels are very wicked men, but we must not take unlawful means to destroy them."* In addition to this written declaration, we have the statement of Captain Skinner, to the effect that, when at a subsequent period the murder of Ameen-oollah was suggested to him by Akbar Khan, the Envoy shrank with abhorrence and disgust from the proposal, "assuring the ambassadors that, as a British functionary, nothing would induce him to pay a price for blood."†

Against the specific written declaration of the Envoy

* In this letter Macnaghten writes: "Mohamed Meerza Khan has not yet come near me. When he does, I shall be glad to advance him 5000 rupees out of the 50,000 which is to be given to him for Khidmut (service). . . . . I had another overture this morning from Zemaun Khan's party, offering us a safe retreat to Peshawur; and they said that Khan Shereen was with them—the party being Jewan Khan, Jubbar Khan, Oosman Khan, Mahomed Akbar Khan, Ameen-oollah Khan, and Khan Shereen Khan. I suspect, from the insertion of the name of the last mentioned, that the whole thing is a fabrication. Let me know your opinion on this point. I replied to their overture by saying that I would not now do anything without the consent of his Majesty."

† *Answers of Captain Colin Mackenzie to Questions put by General Pollock.*—[*MS. Records.*]—Captain Skinner was the only British officer who attended Macnaghten at this conference on the 22nd December. Captain Mackenzie says that he had the assurance from Captain Skinner himself. *See* Appendix.

himself that it was never his object to encourage assassination, coupled with the evidence of Captain Skinner, to the effect that he revolted at the very suggestion, there is nothing but bare presumption to be opposed. If presumption is to carry weight with it, in so grave a discussion as this, it may fairly be presumed that a man of a nature so humane, and of instincts so honourable, would not have encouraged or sanctioned the foul trade of secret murder, and peremptorily denied his approval of measures which he had himself originated or supported. But if he had been utterly destitute both of humanity and truth, it would still be incredible that, having encouraged the assassination of the chiefs, he should have boldly denied it to the very man whom, directly or indirectly, he had employed to hire the assassins.

On a question so grave and solemn as this, it is to be lamented that the judgment of the historian, after all conflicting evidence has been weighed and sifted, should be merely of an inferential character. The inference is, that whilst not wholly ignorant of the offers of head-money, which John Conolly, living with, and probably acting under the directions of Shah Soojah, was putting forth, through the agency of Mohun Lal, the Envoy neither suggested, nor actively encouraged, these "bloody instructions," on which such severe comments have been passed. It has been seen that he was prepared to offer rewards in the name of the King, for the apprehension of the principal rebels; and in the heat and excitement of active warfare, it is hardly probable that, if these men had been apprehended, their offences would have been subjected to a fair and impartial judicial inquiry. Macnaghten, indeed, stated that he would recommend his Majesty to "execute them." Such passive complicity as this, when all the circumstances by which Macnaghten was environed are fairly estimated, cannot be severely censured. We can only arrive at a just decision, in a case of so unprecedented a

character as this, by weighing well all the difficulties which surrounded, all the responsibilities that weighed upon, and all the temptations that beset the Envoy. If so surrounded, so weighed upon, so beset, he did not actively interfere to arrest the questionable measures of others, which seemed to offer some means of escape from the perils which hemmed in the British army—an army fearfully sacrificed by the feebleness of the military chiefs—I confess that I cannot see that he yielded more readily to temptation than any other man of high honour would have done, when begirt with such fiery trial.

But it is a relief to turn aside from the consideration of such a question, even to the record of the imbecility of our military leaders and the sufferings of our unhappy troops. —On the 1st of December there were supplies for barely eight days' consumption in store. The camp-followers were receiving half a pound of barley a day. The cattle were without provender. It was necessary to keep them from absolute starvation by supplying them with the twigs, the lighter branches, and the bark of trees. Some small quantities of wheat were taken from the troops to feed the cattle used in the guns. In this conjuncture, Elphinstone, who met every difficulty more than half way, and who was not likely, therefore, to be silent at such a time as this, wrote on the 1st of November, to the Envoy, saying that there was no Boosa (bran), for the cattle, and that they had been obliged to give the mountain-train yaboos some wheat to keep them alive. "I hope, therefore," he added, "your negotiation may prosper, as circumstances are becoming extremely critical; little has been done in the way of purchase this morning. I don't wish to croak, but think it right that you should be kept constantly informed of the real state of things. Sixty-five maunds is all that has been got in to-day; twelve maunds yesterday."

On the same day, Captain Johnson impressed upon the Envoy that there was no time to be lost—that if a retreat on Jellalabad were to be determined upon, it should be determined upon at once, as it would be necessary to take provisions for five days with the retreating force. The Envoy assented to this; but, ever eager to clutch at any hope, however slender, of deferring the dreadful day of surrender, he added, "Let us wait two days longer—something may turn up."

The two days passed, and nothing turned up. So the military authorities continued to press upon the Envoy, with oft-repeated urgent recommendations, for a speedy conclusion of a treaty with the enemy, enabling the British troops in safety to evacuate the country. But still the Envoy clung to the hope that something might be evolved in our favour; and delayed, in spite of their importunities from day to day, the dreadful hour of surrender. The General knew that his troops were not to be trusted. The Envoy knew this equally well; but, more jealous of the honour of his country, more hopeful and more courageous, he was unwilling to fling away a single chance which the wheel of time might throw up in his favour. In that great chapter of accidents, however, to which he so bravely turned, were written down only further disasters and degradations. On the 5th of December, the enemy, in open day, burnt the bridge which the English had thrown over the Caubul River, a quarter a mile from the cantonments. On the day after the calamitous action of the 23rd of November, the insurgents had begun to destroy it, and now they completed the work of destruction. They burnt it exultingly before the faces of our troops, who were lining the ramparts and looking idly on, as though there were no dishonour in endurance. The bridge was of little use at that season of the year, for the stream was fordable—but it was a

burning disgrace to the military authorities, that with 5000 British troops at their command, and with the ramparts of the cantonments bristling with guns, they should have suffered such an insult as this to be flung in their face.

The following day was one also of humiliation. Mahomed Sheriff's fort, which was garrisoned by a party of European and Native troops, was abandoned on the 6th of December. The enemy, a day or two before, had endeavoured to blow open the gate with powder-bags, but had not succeeded in the attempt. They might have spared themselves the trouble of the effort and the discredit of the failure. On the 6th of December, a very small party of the enemy, unperceived by the garrison, contrived to climb up the walls of the fort, from the direction of the King's garden. They had no sooner shown their heads at the window of the room where our men were sitting, than both Europeans and natives, panic-struck and bewildered, escaped over the opposite wall, and, abandoning their bedding, arms, and ammunition, fled into the cantonments.* The fort was soon filled with the enemy. Not an effort was made to recapture it.† The

* The garrison consisted of about 100 men, 40 being Europeans, under the command of Lieutenant Hawtrey, 37th N.I. Lady Sale says: "The Afghans planted their crooked sticks, which served them for scaling ladders; got up one by one; pulled out the mud (with which the window had been blocked up) and got in. A child with a stick might have repulsed them. The Europeans had their belts and accoutrements off, and the Sepoys the same. They all ran away as fast as they could! The 44th say that the 37th ran first, and as they were too weak they went too. Hawtrey says there was not a pin to choose—all cowards alike. After he was deserted by the men, he himself threw six hand grenades before he followed them. . . . . It was the most shameful of all the runaways that occurred."

† Lady Sale says that the 44th wished to wipe out the stain on the name, as did the Sepoys also (the 37th N.I.). Lieutenant Hawtrey's company volunteered to go with him and "take it without the assist-

guns on the ramparts played upon it all day long, and before evening one of the bastions crumbled to pieces under our fire; but the British troops remained inactive in the cantonments, submitting patiently to every new insult, as though disgrace, now become habitual, had ceased to be a burden to them.

Another blot was, at the same time, fixed upon the character of the unhappy troops. The 44th Queen's regiment had supplied the details of the guard for the protection of the cantonment bazaar. They were now withdrawn under circumstances little calculated to raise the reputation of the corps; and some companies of the 37th Native Infantry were sent to relieve them. A brief letter on this subject, from the General to the Envoy, supplies a painful commentary on the state of the troops at this time. "Three companies of the 37th," wrote Elphinstone, "have been ordered into the bazaar as a guard for it. Shelton wishes a support of the 44th outside. If they have any sense of shame left, they must do better, and their officers *must exert* themselves. S. is disposed to attribute the blame to the Sepoys—from all I hear, I fear unjustly; but this must be inquired into when we have time."

While the troops were thus, day after day, becoming more and more demoralised and incapable, under the destroying influence of feeble and fatuous command, the General and the Envoy were in correspondence and communication relative to the course to be followed for the salvation of the British army and the British honour. The General wrote what none knew better than the

ance of any other troops." The General sent a message to the engineer officer (Lieutenant Sturt) asking if the fort was practicable and tenable —that is, whether our men could take it and hold it. Sturt's answer is worth recording—"Practicable if the men will fight—tenable if they don't run away."

Envoy, that provisions had become miserably scarce, and that he could not see how, if they continued to hold out, they could possibly escape starvation. The Civilian replied that as, if they abandoned their position, they could not carry with them more than two days' supplies, and that there were then, on the 5th of December, nine days' supplies, on half rations, there was no occasion for an immediate decision. He still hung upon the skirts of fortune, hoping that something might be written down, in the great chapter of accidents, in our favour. The thought of retreat was intolerable to him. All, he believed, even if no reinforcements came from Candahar, might yet be saved by a vigorous effort to concentrate the troops in the Balla Hissar. A retreat on Jellalabad, without terms, he declared to be impracticable. And if practicable, he said, it would "cover us with everlasting infamy." Still believing in the fidelity of the King, and still, with all the generosity and the delicacy of a high-minded English gentleman, resolute not to sacrifice the interests or the honour of his Majesty, he pointed out that they could not take the King's family with them, and that Shah Soojah would not stir without them. The internal jealousies and animosities of the chiefs rendered a retreat, under terms that would be respected, equally impracticable. So the Envoy contended that the only alternative which remained, and that the most safe as it was the most honourable, was to send the sick and wounded under cover of the night to the Balla Hissar, and then, having destroyed all the ordnance and stores that they could not take with them, to fight their way to the citadel.

Having written this to the General, Macnaghten visited him, and again urged his opinion, with equal earnestness in oral discourse. Another project suggested itself to Macnaghten. Might it not be possible to obtain provisions by force from some of the surrounding villages? A night-

attack might be made on Deh-Hadjee, or a similar enterprise undertaken against Killa Bolundee. But the General had no taste for night attacks or enterprises of any kind. He was full only of objections. The Envoy took his departure, disappointed and dispirited, and soon afterwards received a letter from Elphinstone, arraying a host of obstacles to the success of all the suggested efforts for the maintenance of the national honour, and staggering at last to the conclusion that there was nothing to be done but to enter into what he called "honourable terms." *

And now matters were at their worst. To what depths of humiliation our unhappy force had sunk, and with what indignation the Envoy regarded a state of things which he was powerless to avert or to remedy, a letter, written about this time to Captain Macgregor, painfully declares. "Our troops," wrote Macnaghten, "are behaving like a pack of despicable cowards, and there is no spirit or enterprise left amongst us. The military authorities want me to capitulate, but this I am anxious to put off to the last moment. In the mean time we shall soon have to come to some decision, as we have only three days' provision for our troops, and nothing for our cattle. We are anxiously looking out for reinforcements from Candahar. We have rumours of their approach, but nothing as yet authentic."

But the direst peril was that of starvation, which had now become imminent. The wretched camp-followers were living upon the carcases of the camels which had been starved to death. The trees in cantonments had been stripped of all their bark and light branches to supply provender to the cattle, and were now all bare and

* The letters to which reference is here made will be found in the Appendix.

useless. The commissariat officers, Boyd and Johnson, wrote a joint letter to the General, stating that, after much fruitless exertion, they had been compelled to adopt the opinion that provisions were no longer obtainable by purchase. It was their duty, they said, "to report, from personal knowledge of the country to the north or north-east of cantonments, the utter impossibility of obtaining, either by force or otherwise, the smallest quantity of grain or forage of any kind within a distance of from three to four miles; and, further, that within this space the whole of the forts, with the exception, perhaps, of one or two, have been evacuated by the inhabitants, and more or less destroyed by the enemy."

Again Macnaghten and Elphinstone took counsel together on that 8th of December, and again they parted to give their opinions the shape of official correspondence. It had now become absolutely necessary that they should determine upon the course to be pursued, for good or for ill. Returned to his quarters, therefore, the Envoy wrote the following letter to the General, to bring the question to an official issue :—

8th Dec., 1841.

SIR,

With reference to the conversation I had the honour to hold with you this morning, I have to request that you will be so good as to state, for my information, whether or no I am right in considering it as your opinion that any further attempt to hold out against the enemy would merely have the effect of sacrificing both His Majesty and ourselves, and that the only alternative left is to negotiate for our safe retreat out of the country on the most favourable terms possible. I understood you to say to-day that all our cattle are starving, and that we have not more than three days' provision, half-rations left for our men, whilst the difficulties of procuring more appear to you to be insurmountable.

It must be remembered that we hear rumours of the approach of reinforcements from Candahar, though nothing in an authentic shape has yet reached us on this subject.

W. H. MACNAGHTEN.

To this letter General Elphinstone sent back an answer, signed also by the three senior officers under his command —Brigadiers Shelton and Anquetil, and Colonel Chambers, who were that morning in council with their chief:

Caubul, 8th Dec., 1841.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day's date, requesting me to state, for your information, whether or not it be my opinion that any further attempt to hold out against the enemy would merely have the effect of sacrificing both His Majesty and ourselves, and that the only alternative left is to negotiate for our safe retreat out of the country on the most favourable terms possible.

In reply, I beg to state that my opinion is that the present situation of the troops here is such, from the want of provisions and the impracticability of procuring more, that no time ought to be lost in entering into negotiations for a safe retreat from the country.

As regards the troops at Candahar, and the rumours of their approach to our assistance, I should be sorry, in the absence of all authentic information, to risk the sacrifice of the troops here by waiting for their arrival, when we are ignorant even of their having commenced their march, and are reduced to three days' supply of provision for our Sepoys at half-rations, and almost entirely without forage for our horses and cattle.

Our number of sick and wounded in hospital exceeds 600, and our means for their transport is far from adequate, owing to the death by starvation of so many of our camels; from the same cause also we shall be obliged at this inclement season to leave the tents and bedding behind with such a march before us.

As regards the King, I must be excused entering upon that point of your letter, and leave its consideration to your better judgment and knowledge; but I may be allowed to say that it little becomes me, as commanding the British troops in Afghanistan, to regard the necessity of negotiating in any other light than as concerns their honour or welfare, both of which I should be answerable for by a further stay here, after the sudden and universal rebellion which has taken place throughout the dominions.

The whole of the grain and forage in our vicinity is exhausted, and the defence of this extensive and ill-situated cantonment will not admit of distant expeditions to obtain supplies from the

strongly-fortified dwellings of an armed and hostile population, our present numbers being insufficient for its defence, and obliging the whole of the troops to be almost constantly under arms.

In conclusion, I can only repeat my opinion that you should lose no time in entering into negotiations.

W. K. ELPHINSTONE, Major-Gen.,
Commanding in Afghanistan.

I concur in the above opinions.

J. SHELTON, Brigadier.

In a military point of view, I concur in the above.

W. ANQUETIL, Brigadier,
Commanding Shah Soojah's Forces.

I also concur.

R. CHAMBERS, Lieut.-Col.,
Commanding Cavalry.

Still shrinking from the dreadful thought of surrender, Macnaghten, soon after the receipt of this letter, went over to the General's quarters, and wrung from him a reluctant promise to make one more attempt to secure supplies, by an expedition against one of the forts or villages in which they were known to be stored. A council of war was held that evening at the General's quarters. The Envoy was present at the meeting. The commissariat officers were also in attendance. There was a long and stormy discussion. At length it was determined that on the following morning a detachment of infantry and cavalry, with a gun, should be despatched, accompanied by Captain Johnson, to the village of Khoja Rewash, some four miles from cantonments, where it was believed that a considerable supply of grain was stored. The village was to be surprised before daybreak. The inhabitants were to be called upon to sell their grain; and, in the event of their acquiescence, Captain Johnson was to purchase it. But in the event of their refusal, the village was to be carried by assault, and the grain taken by force. The detachment was to start at two o'clock, and, that there might be no delay in the departure of the force,

every preparation was to be made before that hour, and the troops were to be under arms for an immediate march.

The appointed hour arrived. Captain Johnson was ready to accompany the detachment. The troops were under arms; but no preparations had been made for their departure. A bridge was to have been laid down for the passage of the cavalry and artillery, and covered with straw, that no noise might be made to rouse the suspicions of the enemy; but at two o'clock no orders had been issued, and it was evident that there were doubts and embarrassments to impede the progress of the expedition. Something was wrong, and it became known at last that the enterprise was discovered to be a dangerous one. The enemy were in force in the dilapidated village of Behmeru, and so, just as day began to dawn, the enterprise was altogether abandoned.

In the course of the day intelligence of a cheering character was received from Jellalabad. Sale's little garrison had sallied out and gallantly defeated the enemy. It was hoped by the Envoy and a few others, who were turning their eyes in every direction, straining to catch even the faintest ray of hope, that the improved aspect of affairs at Jellalabad would induce the military authorities to make new efforts to maintain their position. But all hope of this kind was soon dissipated. The General, fearful of the encouragement of such expectations, addressed an official letter to the Envoy, stating that the intelligence received from Sir R. Sale did not, in his opinion, after the most mature consideration, so improve their situation as to alter the sentiments expressed in his letter of the preceding day, as to the necessity of a treaty being entered into, if possible, with the enemy; but he looked upon the arrival of this account of the success obtained over the rebels as most opportune, for he considered that it could

not but prove highly advantageous in our negotiations. The General could only see in the cheering news from Jellalabad another reason for entering into terms with the enemy.

All this time the Envoy had been anxiously looking for tidings of the advance of the force under Colonel Maclaren, which had been despatched from Candahar. The communications with that place had been so completely cut off, that it was not until the 10th of December that Macnaghten received intelligence from Colonel Palmer, who commanded the garrison at Ghuznee, that there was little prospect of Maclaren's brigade making good its march to Caubul. The inclemency of the weather and the loss of baggage-cattle had been so great, that Maclaren, struggling on with difficulty, was dreading the necessity of a retrograde move. The Envoy had been eager to hold out so long as the least hope remained of receiving succour from the westward. That hope was now rapidly waning. The provisions in cantonments were almost wholly exhausted. On the morning of the 11th there was just food enough for the day's consumption of the fighting men. The camp-followers were starving. Food was not to be obtained by purchase, for the villagers would not sell; food was not to be obtained by fighting, for the soldiers would not fight. Macnaghten had urged the nobler course, until repeated disappointments had made him despair of military success. There was now, indeed, nothing left to him but to negotiate with the enemy, or to suffer the force in cantonments to perish by the slow process of starvation before his face. He had suggested every other course to no purpose. He had resisted the importunities of the military authorities, clamouring for surrender, until there were no provisions in store for the morrow, and no hope of replenishing our empty granaries. He could not now any longer resist; so he drew out the

rough draft of a treaty, and met the Afghan chiefs in conference.

The meeting took place at the distance of about a mile from the cantonments, on the banks of the Caubul river. Captains Lawrence, Trevor, and Mackenzie accompanied the Envoy, with a few troopers of the body-guard as an escort. The chiefs of all the principal tribes in the country were present. Among the leading men assembled were Mahomed Akbar Khan, Oosman Khan, Sultan Mahomed Khan, Mahomed Sheriff, Mahomed Shah Khan, and Khoda Buksh Khan, Ghilzye. The first salutations over, the Envoy drew forth the draft treaty he had prepared, and read in Persian the following articles, with their preamble, to the assembled chiefs:

Whereas it has become apparent from recent events that the continuance of the British army in Afghanistan for the support of Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk is displeasing to the great majority of the Afghan nation; and whereas the British Government had no other object in sending troops to this country than the integrity, happiness, and welfare of the Afghans, and, therefore, it can have no wish to remain when that object is defeated by its presence; the following conditions have been agreed upon between Sir W. H. Macnaghten, Bart., Envoy and Minister at the Court of Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk for the British Government on the one part, and by Sirdar [ ] for the Afghan nation on the other part.

1st. The British troops now at Caubul will repair to Peshawur with all practical expedition, and thence return to India.

2nd. The Sirdars engage that the British troops shall be unmolested in their journey, shall be treated with all honour, and receive all possible assistance in carriage and provisions.

Here, Akbar Khan, with characteristic impetuosity, interrupted the Envoy, saying that there was no need to furnish our force with supplies, as there was no impediment to their marching on the morrow. The other chiefs rebuked him for this interference. The remainder of the treaty was then read, as follows, without any further

uncourteous interruptions; and, this ebullition over, the young Barukzye himself subsided into repose.*

3rd. The troops now at Jellalabad shall receive orders to retire to Peshawur, so soon as the envoy-and-minister is satisfied that their progress will be uninterrupted.

4th. The troops now at Ghuznee will follow, *viâ* Caubul, to Peshawur, as soon as arrangements can be made for their journey in safety.

5th. The troops now at Candahar, or elsewhere within the limits of Afghanistan, will return to India, either *viâ* Caubul or the Bolan Pass, as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made, and the season admits of marching.

6th. The stores and property of whatever description formerly belonging to Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan will be restored.

7th. All property belonging to British officers which may be left behind in Afghanistan will be carefully preserved and sent to India as opportunities may offer.

8th. Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk will be allowed either to remain in Afghanistan on a suitable provision for his maintenance, not being under one lakh of rupees per annum, or to accompany the British troops on their return to India.

9th. All attention and respect will be paid to such of the Shah's family as may be unable to accompany him, and they shall be permitted to occupy their present place of residence in the Balla Hissar until their return to India, should the Shah resolve in accompanying the British troops.

10th. On the safe arrival of the British troops at Peshawur, arrangements will be immediately made for the return to Afghanistan of the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, his family, and all other Afghans detained in India.

11th. So soon as the Ameer with his family shall reach Peshawur, on their return to Caubul, the family of the Shah shall be allowed to return towards India.

12th. For the due fulfilment of the above conditions four respectable British officers will be left in Caubul as hostages, and will be allowed to return to India on the arrival of the Ameer and his family at Peshawur.

* It is said that Akbar Khan proposed to seize the Envoy at this meeting, but that the other chiefs were adverse to the proceeding. I do not know whether this story rests upon good authority.

13. Sirdar Mahomed Akbar Khan, Sirdar Mahomed Oosman Khan, and such other chiefs of influence as may be so disposed, will accompany the British troops to Peshawur.

14th. Notwithstanding the retirement of the British troops from Afghanistan, there will always be friendship between that nation and the English, so much so that the Afghans will contract no alliance with any other foreign power without the consent of the English, for whose assistance they will look in the hour of need.

15th. Should it hereafter be the desire of the Afghan nation, and the British Government to consent thereto, a British resident at Caubul may be appointed to keep up the friendly communication between the two governments, but without interfering in any way with the internal administration of Afghanistan.

16th. No one is to be molested on account of any part he may have taken in the late contest; and any person desirous of going to India with the British troops shall be permitted to do so.

17th. From the date on which these articles are agreed, the Sirdars above named undertake that the British troops shall be supplied with provisions on rendering payment for the same.

18th. All British officers and troops who may be unable from any cause, to quit Afghanistan immediately shall be treated with all honour and respect, and receive every assistance until the state of the season and of their preparations admits of their departure.

The conference lasted two hours. The terms of the treaty were discussed with as much calmness and moderation as could have been expected, and its main stipulations were agreed to by the assembled chiefs. It was resolved that the British troops should evacuate their cantonments within three days, and that the chiefs should, in the meanwhile, send in provisions for their use. The meeting broke up, and Captain Trevor accompanied the Khans to the city, "as a hostage for the sincerity of the Envoy."

It is scarcely necessary to write anything in vindication of the conduct of Macnaghten with respect to this early treaty. His vindication is to be found in the preceding correspondence with the military chiefs. But a

few pregnant sentences, in which he has himself recorded the circumstances under which he was at last induced to throw himself upon the forbearance of the enemy, ought to be laid before the reader, embodying as they do the Envoy's own justification of his conduct. "The whole country," he wrote in his unfinished report, "as far as we could learn, had risen in rebellion; our communications on all sides were cut off; almost every public officer, whether paid by ourselves or his Majesty, had declared for the new governor, and by far the greater number even of his Majesty's domestic servants had deserted him. We had been fighting forty days against very superior numbers, under most disadvantageous circumstances, with a deplorable loss of valuable lives, and in a day or two we must have perished from hunger, to say nothing of the advanced season of the year and the extreme cold, from the effects of which our native troops were suffering severely. I had been repeatedly apprised by the military authorities that nothing could be done with our troops; and I regret to add that desertions to the enemy were becoming of frequent occurrence among our troops. The terms I secured were the best obtainable, and the destruction of fifteen thousand human beings would little have benefited our country, whilst the government would have been almost compelled to avenge our fate at whatever cost. We shall part with the Afghans as friends, and I feel satisfied that any government which may be established hereafter will always be disposed to cultivate a good understanding with us. A retreat without terms would have been impracticable. It is true, that by entering into terms, we are prevented from undertaking the conquest of the entire country—a measure which, from my knowledge of the views of government, I feel convinced would never be resorted to even were the means at hand. But such a project, in the present state of our

Indian finances, and the requisitions for troops in various quarters, I knew could not be entertained." *

I wish that it were not more difficult to acquit the military chiefs. General Elphinstone's correspondence contains what he conceived to be a justification of his conduct in urging Macnaghten to capitulate. Brigadier Shelton has left upon record a statement of which it is only just to his memory that it should have the full credit: "The great extent of cantonments," he wrote in the narrative drawn up by him at Buddeeabad, "and defenceless nature of the ramparts (an officer having actually ridden over them), effectually compromised our force, by the necessity to watch and protect every foot of the works, from their extreme weakness, and the consequent danger of sending out a force of sufficient strength to ensure victory, against a numerous enemy flushed with success, while our troops were disheartened, on half-rations of parched wheat, and harassed and worn out from constant duty on the ramparts, whose weakness required their presence night and day, exposed to excessive cold by night, with little covering and less comfort. The great oversight of neglecting to bring in provisions for the winter could not be remedied. The impossibility of procuring them by force in a country studded with forts, every one of which required a regular attack, was apparent to all. The Ricka-bashee Fort, close to cantonments, cost us 200 men. What must distant ones not have cost us—sniped the whole way out and home by long rifles out of range of our fire, through snow, with the thermometer at zero? There was nothing under such circumstances dishonourable in a necessary retreat, which might have been effected before the snow fell, and whilst there were a few days' provisions in store, with some hope of success. Had

* *Unfinished Report of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*—[*MS. Records.*]

provisions been stored in cantonments for the winter, the troops would have been in better heart, and resistance made until timely assistance should arrive. The party at Jellalabad was more favoured, both in provisions and a more congenial climate."

Posterity will not accept such apologies as these. That difficulties and dangers of no common kind beset the path of the military commanders in those Caubul cantonments is not to be gainsaid. But war is made of difficulties and dangers. It is the glory of the soldier to live in the midst of them, and to do his best to overcome them. Elphinstone and Shelton were sent to Caubul to face difficulties and dangers, not to turn away from them. The existence of the evils here set forth in such formidable array is not questioned or doubted. Some at least of them were the growth of our own weakness; for difficulties not met with energy and decision are wonderfully reproductive. They thicken around the wavering and irresolute. If, on the 10th of December, Elphinstone and Shelton, after bravely struggling, throughout six long peril-laden weeks, against the difficulties which were thronging around them, had at last succumbed to their pressure, they would have been entitled to the respect, no less than to the pity, of the world. But it was not so much that the circumstances were strong, as that the men were weak. As early as the 5th of November—three days after the first outbreak of the insurrection—Elphinstone had begun to think and to write about terms. Shelton was not much behind him in his recommendations of the same ignoble course. They were both of them brave men. In any other situation, though the physical infirmities of the one, and the cankered vanity, the dogmatical perverseness of the other, might have in some measure detracted from their efficiency as military commanders, I believe that they would have exhibited sufficient constancy and courage to rescue our

army from utter destruction, and the British name from indelible reproach. But in the Caubul cantonments they were miserably out of place. They seem to have been sent there, by superhuman intervention, to work out the utter ruin and prostration of an unholy policy by ordinary human means.

It is remarkable, indeed, that the chief conduct of our military operations, in this critical conjuncture, should have been in the hands of two men so utterly unlike each other, and yet so equal in their incapacity for such command. I believe it be no exaggeration to affirm, that there were not in India two men of the same high rank equally unfitted by circumstance and by character for the command of the Caubul army. The one had everything to learn; the other had everything to unlearn. Elphinstone knew nothing of the native army. Shelton was violently prejudiced against it. Elphinstone, in a new and untried position, had no opinion of his own, but flung himself upon the judgment of any one with confidence enough to form and express one. Shelton, on the other hand, was proud of his experience, and obstinately wedded to his own opinions. Opposition irritated and enfeebled him. To overrule and to thwart him at the commencement of an enterprise entrusted to his charge was to secure its ignominious failure. Whether by accident or by design, he generally contrived to demonstrate the soundness of his own judgment, by being disastrously beaten in every attempt to carry out the projects forced upon him by the preponderating counsels of others. Had Shelton exercised the chief military control, though he might have committed some errors, he would probably have distinguished himself more than in the secondary position which he was compelled to occupy. On him was thrown the burden of the executive duties. Whilst others overruled his opinions, he was made responsible for the

success of enterprises against which he protested, and with which he was the last man in the country heartily to identify himself under circumstances so irritating and depressing. It would have been impossible, indeed, to have brought together two men so individually disqualified for their positions—so inefficient in themselves, and so doubly inefficient in combination. Each made the other worse. The only point on which they agreed was, unhappily, the one on which it would have been well if they had differed. They agreed in urging the Envoy to capitulate. There was a curse upon them that clouded their brains and made faint their hearts, and moved them to seek safety in a course at once the most discreditable and the most perilous of all that opened out before them.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

[December, 1841.]

Preparations for the Retreat—Evacuation of the Balla Hissar—Progress of the Negotiations—Continued Delay—Variations of the Treaty—Designs of the Envoy—Overtures of Mahomed Akbar Khan—Death of Sir William Macnaghten—His Character.

And now began preparations for the retreat. Orders were dispatched to the Balla Hissar for the evacuation of that position by the British troops; and it was said that in two days the whole force would be moving towards the British provinces. Doubtful of our good faith, the chiefs withheld the promised supplies; but small quantities of grain were procured from the Balla Hissar. In the meanwhile, though our commissariat store-rooms were empty, our military magazines were full.* There was a scramble among the soldiers for new arms and accoutre-

* The General had announced, as early as the 6th of November, that his ammunition was failing him; but on the 13th of December the magazine was so well supplied that he ordered it to be served out to the camp-followers. The Balla Hissar had, in the meanwhile, been liberally furnished from cantonments.

ments; and even the camp-followers, to whom ammunition was served out by orders of the General, came in for a share of the spoil.

The Balla Hissar was evacuated by the British troops on the 13th of December. Akbar-Khan had pledged himself to conduct the party safely to cantonments. Grain was of unspeakable value at this time; but time was valuable too. In our efforts to save the former we lost the latter. There were 1600 maunds of wheat to be conveyed to cantonments, and the packing and loading were more than a day's work. Great as had been the exertions of the commissariat officer, and worthy of all praise, Major Ewart was compelled to break in upon his labours, and move off his force, before the baggage-cattle were ready to start with their precious loads. It was six o'clock in mid-winter, very dark, and bitterly cold, when the troops began to march slowly out of the Balla Hissar. Akbar Khan and his followers had been for some time in readiness to escort them to cantonments; and now it was whispered among the King's people that a trap had been laid for the destruction of the force, and that not a man would reach his destination. Major Ewart moved out his men; and the party had scarcely cleared the gate when a rush, it was said, was made by some of Akbar Khan's jezailchees to obtain admittance to the Balla Hissar. The gates were immediately closed; the King's troops on the walls opened a smart fire of musketry on friends and on foes alike. Then followed a shower of grape, striking down some of our Sepoys, and creating no little dismay and confusion in our ranks.

The Seeah-Sungh hills, along the base of which lay the road between the Balla Hissar and the cantonments, were bristling with Ghilzye banditti. At that late hour, Akbar Khan declared that it would be almost impossible to restrain them, and that therefore, if the British force would

secure its safety, it must abstain from prosecuting its march towards cantonments until he had made arrangements with the chiefs—in fact, that it must halt till the morrow. On that dark, frosty December night this was, indeed, a discouraging announcement. The troops were halted on low marshy ground, under the walls of the fort. The ground was white with the hoar frost. The air was bitingly cold. They would have lit fires and clustered around them, but there was no fuel in their reach. They had no tents. They had no bedding. They had no food. They were every minute expecting to be attacked by the enemy. In this cheerless, miserable state they could do nothing but stand, or walk about, looking for the rising of the morning star.* The night was a long one, but it came to a close at last. The miseries of the darkness were now to be succeeded by the perils of the dawn. They were only about six hundred strong, and the road was infested by thousands of the enemy. They had nothing on which to depend but the good faith of Akbar Khan and their own steadiness and courage. Happily the former did not fail them. Akbar Khan did not play the traitor. The rear-guard was molested by a party of Afghans, and the Sirdar himself, with a few followers, galloped into the midst of his hostile countrymen, and threatened to cut down all who dared to oppose the progress of the detachment. About ten o'clock the force reached cantonments in safety; but "thoroughly exhausted with hunger and fatigue."†

It has been stated, that when on the evening of the 13th of December the British troops moved out of the Balla Hissar, an attempt was made by some of the followers of Akbar Khan to obtain admittance. It has been

* At the suggestion of Lieutenant Conolly they endeavoured to obtain re-admittance to the Balla Hissar, but were fired upon by the garrison, who had been ordered by the King to admit no one.

† *Narrative of Lieutenant Melville.*

said that it was the Sirdar's object to seize the gate, so as to admit the main body of his followers, and to carry the place by storm. It has been surmised, also, that the Sirdar delayed the march of Major Ewart's detachment, hoping that the gates of the Balla Hissar would be re-opened to the British troops; and that then, under cover of the night, his followers might force an entrance into the place.* A very different account of this incident, however, has been left on record by the Envoy himself. "On the 13th of December," he wrote, "it was agreed upon that our troops should evacuate the Balla Hissar, and return to the cantonment, whilst the Barukzyes should have a conference with his Majesty, with a view to his retaining the nominal powers of sovereignty, they, for their own security, placing a guard of their own in the upper citadel. No sooner, however, had our troops left the Balla Hissar, than his Majesty, owing to some panic or misunderstanding, ordered the gate to be shut, and the proposed conference was thereby prevented. So offended were the Barukzyes, that they determined never to offer his Majesty the same terms again. In explanation of his conduct, his Majesty states that the party whom the Barukzyes desired to introduce was not the party which had been agreed upon."† This was, probably, one of the last sentences ever penned by Sir William Macnaghten. It closes the fragment of the official report found in his writing-desk after his death.

The treaty read by the Envoy at the conference on the 11th of December contained an article involving the formal abdication of Shah Soojah. The restoration of the Barukzye Sirdars to their old principalities was, at that time, decreed by both contracting parties; but the meeting had scarcely broken up, when some of the Douranee

* *Eyre's Journal.* † *MS. Records.*

chiefs, jealous of the power of the Barukzyes, which had ever been put forth to the injury and depression of the tribes, recoiled from this perilous stipulation, and began to think of the retention of the King, at all events as a puppet and a name.* On the following day it was proposed by the chiefs that Shah Soojah should remain on the throne, on condition of his intermarrying his daughters with the leading Afghan Sirdars, and vesting the Wuzcership in the family of the Barukzyes. It was stipulated also that the King, whose love of pomp and ceremony was one of his besetting infirmities, and who had excited the indignation of many of the chiefs by his haughty bearing towards them, should dispense with some of the regal formalities which had given them so great offence. The proposal, sanctioned by the British minister, was formally made to the Shah. There was the loss of his kingdom on the one side; there was the loss of some regal dignity on the other. The King hesitated; then yielded a reluctant assent; and a few days afterwards withdrew it altogether. His pride and his fear both deterred him from forming such an alliance with the chiefs. He was unwilling so to sully the purity of the royal blood; and he could not trust to the good faith of the Sirdars after the departure of his British allies. And so the treaty with the Barukzye chiefs reverted to its original shape, and the Shah determined to return to the British provinces, from which he had never yet emerged without plunging into new disasters.

* Mohun Lal says that this was the Envoy's design. "This agreement," he wrote in a letter to Mr. Colvin, "which the Envoy had prudently made to create dissension, disappointed all the Douranee rebels, &c., who were alarmed at the return of the Dost. They immediately began to communicate with the Shah, and assured him to take his side, which, in fact, was the object of the Envoy."—[*MS. Records.*]

The stipulations of the treaty were now to be brought into effect. But mutual distrust existed between the parties, and each was unwilling to give the other any advantage by being the first to act up to the obligations that it imposed. The British authorities called upon the chiefs to send in the provisions which they had undertaken to supply; and the chiefs called upon the British authorities to demonstrate the sincerity of their promises to retire from Afghanistan, by giving up the different forts which they occupied in the neighbourhood of cantonments, and by placing hostages in their hands. The question of the abandonment of the forts was officially discussed between the Envoy and the General, and the result was an order for their cession.*

No time was lost in carrying this arrangement into effect. Whatever dilatoriness may have been displayed on other occasions, there was no want of alacrity evinced when anything was to be yielded to the enemy. Our garrisons were speedily withdrawn from the forts, and the victorious insurgents duly placed in possession of them. By four o'clock in the afternoon, the Afghan conquerors were sitting on the walls of these ceded forts, looking into the British cantonments, and joking over our discomfiture.† A brother of the Newab Zemaun Khan was sent in as a hostage on the part of the enemy;‡ and a small supply of attah was furnished to the troops.

Provisions, however, came in very slowly; and carriage

* The correspondence upon [this subject will be found in the Appendix.

† Shelton was opposed to the cession of the forts. "On my opinion being asked," he says, "I pronounced it injudicious, and it was declined; but about two days afterwards the order was given, and I was directed to give up all."—[*MS. Records.*]

‡ It was thought, however, that there was too much disunion among the Afghans, at this time, to render the hostage-giving any kind of

was not sent in at all. There was a mixed crowd of robbers and fanatics swarming between the city and the cantonments, ever on the alert to intercept the supplies that were sent in either by the Sirdars or by private speculators. All kinds of outrages were committed, in the very face of our guards, and under the very muzzles of our guns; but not a shot was fired upon the plunderers. Our enemies, now become "our new allies," were to be treated with all possible consideration. Nothing was to be done to interrupt the good feeling which was now said to have been established; and so, whilst our troops were starving, the military authorities suffered the grain so eagerly looked for by the wretched force to be swept away from them, under the very walls of cantonments, by a miserable rabble, whom a few rounds of grape would have scattered like a flock of sheep.

This was a season of perilous procrastination. Both parties seemed anxious to postpone the day that was to witness the departure of the British force; and each was suspicious of the good faith of the other. The chiefs withheld, from day to day, the provisions and the carriage-cattle, with which they had undertaken to facilitate our escape from Afghanistan; and Macnaghten, hoping still against hope, and sanguine, even in the midst of every kind of discouragement, still thought that "something might turn up" to avert the humiliation of an enforced withdrawal from the country which we had entered with so much pomp and parade. It was still possible, he thought, that Maclaren's brigade might make good its way to Caubul. It was not then known that it had retraced its steps to Candahar.

security—inasmuch as the sacrifice of a hostage might have pleased more than it offended. It was said by Sultan Jan, of the hostage now in our camp, "Oh! he is a dog of a man; what should we have cared if you had killed him?"—[*Lieut. Melville's Narrative.*]

Then snow began to fall. On the 18th of December, the doomed force looked out upon the new horror. From morning to evening prayer it fell with frightful perseverance, and before sunset was lying many inches thick upon the ground. Our difficulties had now fearfully increased. Had the force been set in motion a few days before the first snow fall, and, moving lightly, pushed on by forced marches through the passes, it might have reached Jellalabad in safety. But now everything was against us. The elements were conspiring for our destruction. It was more and more painfully obvious, every day, that the curse of God was brooding over the agents of an unrighteous policy. Whatever may have been the causes of that week's delay—whether the bad faith of the chiefs, the irresolution of the Shah, or the reluctance of the British Envoy, it cut away from under us the last hope that remained of rescuing the British force from the annihilating dangers that hemmed it in on every side.

The 22nd was now fixed upon as the day for the departure of the British troops. On the 19th, the Envoy and the General despatched letters to Ghuznee, Candahar, and Jellalabad, ordering the evacuation of those positions. Money was given freely to the chiefs for cattle which was not sent in for our use; and it was believed that Mahomed Akbar was expending the treasure thus raised on the instruments of our destruction. "Our new allies" had become more insolent and defiant. As our difficulties thickened, their demands rose. All hope of succours from Candahar vanished on that 19th of December, when intelligence of the return of Maclaren's brigade was received by the Envoy. Macnaghten had clung to this chance, with desperate tenacity, to the last —and now he abandoned all hope of saving the reputation of his country by beating the enemy in the field.

But he had not yet abandoned all hope of saving the reputation of his country by playing a game of dexterous diplomacy, such as could only have been played against a number of disunited factions, almost as hostile to each other as to the common foe. It is not easy to group into one lucid and intelligible whole all the many shifting schemes and devices which distracted the last days of the Envoy's career. It is probable that at this time he could have given no very clear account of the game which he was playing. He appears to have turned first to one party and then to another, eagerly grasping at every new combination that seemed to promise more hopeful results than the last. His mind was by this time unhinged;—his intellect was clouded; his moral perceptions were deadened. The wonder is, not that he was pressed down at last by the tremendous burden of anxiety which had sate upon him throughout those seven long weeks of unparalleled suffering and disaster, but that he had borne up so long and so bravely under the weight.

It seems, indeed, that Macnaghten, at this time, never knew, from one day to another, with whom he would eventually conclude a treaty for the extrication of the unhappy force from the perils that girt it around as with a ring of fire. He was throwing about money in all directions, and there were hungry claimants, pressing on now from one direction now from another, eager to turn the sufferings of the Feringhees to the best account, and to find the best market for their own influence and authority. He saw no honesty and sincerity among the chiefs; he saw that they were all contending one against the other; every man thinking only of himself. He knew that they had failed in their engagements to him, and he doubted whether he was bound by the obligations which he had contracted, or was free to negotiate with any one who was willing, and able, to offer or to

accept terms less degrading in themselves and less likely to be violated. It was his general design to keep the different factions in a state of antagonism with each other, and to cling to the one best able to protect us from the malice of the rest. But he could not determine, of the many combinations that could be formed, which was the best calculated to evolve a state of things most favourable to British interests, and so he seems to have had more than one game in hand at the same time, and hardly to have known which was to be played out.

Ostensibly Macnaghten was at this time in treaty with the Barukzye party. But he was offering at the same time large sums of money to the Ghilzyes and to the Kuzzilbashes to side with the Shah and the British; and if they had declared themselves openly on our side, he might have thrown over the Barukzye alliance. "You can tell the Ghilzyes and Khan Shereen," he wrote on the 20th of December to Mohun Lal, "that after they have declared for his Majesty and us, and sent in 100 *kurwars* of grain to cantonments, I shall be glad to give them a bond for five lakhs of rupees; and if Naib Sheriff is satisfied that they will do so, he should advance to them as much money as he can. I fear for Mahomed Shah that he is with Akbar; but you will know best. You must let me know before sunrise, if possible, what is likely to be the effect of this proposal, as I must talk accordingly to the Barukzyes, who have shown no disposition to be honest. To save time, you may tell Khan Shereen to correspond with the Shah, if there is a chance of success."

On the following day he wrote again to Mohun Lal, unfolding his views more distinctly with regard to the contemplated alliance with the Ghilzyes and the Kuzzilbashes, out of which he still hoped that something might be evolved to avert the retreat which was so loathsome

to him. "In conversing," he wrote, "with anybody, you must say distinctly that I am ready to stand by my engagement with the Barukzyes and other chiefs associated with them; but that if any portion of the Afghans wish our troops to remain in the country, I shall think myself at liberty to break the engagement which I have made to go away, which engagement was made believing it to be in accordance with the wishes of the Afghan nation. If the Ghilzyes and Kuzzilbashes wish us to stay, let them declare so openly in the course of to-morrow, and we will side with them. The best proof of their wish for us to stay is to send us a large quantity of grain this night—100 or 200 kurwars. If they do this, and make their salaam to the Shah early to-morrow, giving his Majesty to understand that we are along with them, I will write to the Barukzyes and tell them my agreement is at an end; but if they (Ghilzyes and Kuzzilbashes) are not prepared to go all lengths with us, nothing should be said about the matter, because the agreement I have made is very good for us."

An hour afterwards he wrote again to Mohun Lal, repeating all this in still more decided language, and declaring that if grain were obtained he should think himself "at liberty to break his agreement of going away on Friday, because that agreement was made under the belief that all the Afghan people wished us to go away." "Do not let me appear in this matter," he wrote, in conclusion; "say that I am ready to stand by my engagement, but that I leave it to the people themselves." And again after the lapse of another hour, he wrote: "If any grain is coming in to-night, let me have notice of it a few minutes before. Anything that may be intended in our favour must appear before noon to-morrow."

Far better than any explanations that I could offer do

such words as these unfold the character of Macnaghten's designs. The days on which they were written saw the Envoy in conference, near the banks of the canal, with Akbar Khan and a few chiefs of the Barukzye party. As time advanced, the Sirdars rose in their demands; and every new meeting witnessed the dictation of fresh terms. They called upon us to deliver up to them all our military stores and ammunition, and to surrender the married families as hostages for the fulfilment, on our part, of the conditions of the treaty. Then they demanded that Brigadier Shelton should be given over to them as a hostage; but the Brigadier was unwilling to accept the duty, and the proposal was declined. The hostages given up on the 21st of December were Lieutenants J. B. Conolly, the Envoy's relative and assistant, and Lieutenant Airey, of the 3rd Buffs, who had been acting as the General's aide-de-camp.

On the following day the commissary of ordnance, Lieutenant Eyre, was "ordered to conduct an officer of the Newab Zemaun Khan over the magazine, that he might make choice of such stores as would be most acceptable to the chiefs."* At the same time the Envoy sent his carriage and horses as a present to Akbar Khan. He was now beginning to despair of deriving any real assistance from the Ghilzyes, who were slow to declare themselves openly on our side, and he saw plainly how dangerous it was to appear to be in treaty with them and the Barukzyes at the same time. Some doubts, too, of the honesty of the course he was pursuing began to obtrude themselves upon him; and he wrote accordingly to Mohun Lal, requesting him to instruct the Ghilzyes not to send in any grain until further advised upon the subject. "The sending grain to us just now," he said,

* *Eyre's Journal.*

"would do more harm than good to our cause; and it would lead the Barukzyes to suppose that I am intriguing with a view of breaking my agreement; but I can never break that agreement so long as all the Khawanen wish me to stand by it. Pray thank our friends, nevertheless, for their kind attention to our interest. I wish very much to please them, and am sorry my treasury is so empty."

On the same day Macnaghten sent 7000 rupees to Khan Shereen Khan, the chief of the Kuzzilbashes, but urged Mohun Lal to keep it secret, as there was scarcely any money left. He had become doubtful by this time of the honesty of intriguing with one party, whilst he was bound by engagements to another; so he urged the Moonshee to tell the Ghilzyes to send him no more grain. "If," he wrote on the 22nd of December, "while our present agreement lasts I were to receive a large supply of grain from the Ghilzyes, suspicion would be raised that I intend to break my engagement, and wish to keep the troops here, in spite of the wishes of all the chiefs to the contrary. It would be very agreeable to stop here for a few months instead of having to travel through the snow; but we must not consider what is agreeable, but what is consistent with our faith."

It was on the evening of this 22nd of December, when Macnaghten, long tossed about on a sea of doubt and distraction—perplexed in the extreme by the manifest bad faith and the ever-increasing demands of the chiefs—seeing no end to the perilous uncertainties of his position, and wearied out beyond human endurance by days and nights of ceaseless anxiety and bewilderment—was in a temper to grasp at any new thing that might seem to open a door of escape from the embarrassments which surrounded him, that Akbar Khan sent in Captain Skinner from the city with a new string of proposals.

The Envoy had been warned of the danger of treating

independently with the young Barukzye Sirdar; he had been told that treachery was spreading itself around him, and that he would be enclosed in its toils. But he had now become desperate. Anything was better than the wearing uncertainty which had so long been unhinging his mind. Akbar Khan sent tempting proposals; and the Envoy flung himself upon the snare. He knew that there was danger, but he had become regardless of it. Anything was better than the life he had so long been leading. Even death itself was better than such a life.

Captain Skinner came into cantonments, accompanied by Mahomed Sadig and Surwar Khan, the Lohanee merchant.* The English officer sate down to dinner with the Envoy whilst the two Afghans remained in another room. A gleam of hope passed over Macnaghten's care-worn face when Skinner told him, in a light jesting manner, that he was the bearer of a message from Akbar Khan of a portentous nature, and that he felt as one loaded with combustibles.† But the message was not then delivered. The proposals were to be stated by the Afghan delegates, who were soon closeted with the Envoy. Skinner alone was present at the interview. Mahomed Sadig stated the proposals that had been made by Akbar Khan. It was proposed that an agreement should be entered into on the following day, to the effect that Akbar Khan and the Ghilzyes should unite themselves with the British troops, which were to be drawn up outside of cantonments, and at a given signal should

* Mahomed Sadig was a first cousin of Akbar Khan. Surwar Khan had been, in the earlier stages of the campaign, extensively engaged in supplying the army with camels. He was in the confidence of Sir A. Burnes, and was generally esteemed a friend of the British.

† *Letter of Captain Colin Mackenzie to Lieutenant Eyre: Eyre's Journal.*

assault Mahmood Khan's fort and seize the person of Ameen-oollah Khan. Then followed a startling offer, from which the Envoy shrunk back with abhorrence. This was the offer of Ameen-oollah's head, which, for a sum of money, Mahomed Sadig declared should be presented to the British Envoy. Macnaghten at once rejected the offer. It was never, he said, his custom, nor that of his country, to pay a price for blood. Then Mahomed Sadig went on to state the proposals of the Barukzye Sirdar. The English were to remain in Afghanistan until the spring; and then, to save their credit, by withdrawing, as though of their own free will. Shah Soojah was to remain in the country as King, and Akbar Khan was to be his Wuzeer. As a reward for these services, Akbar Khan was to receive an annuity of four lakhs of rupees from the British Government, and a bonus of thirty lakhs!

Wild as were these proposals, the Envoy caught eagerly at them. He did not hesitate for a moment. He had, from first to last, clung to the hope of something being evolved out of the chaos of difficulty, that would enable him to retain his position in the country, at all events till the coming spring; and now there suddenly welled up within him a hope that he had obtained the object of his desires. He now accepted the proposals; and signified his assent in a Persian paper written by his own hand. With this the Afghan delegates returned to the city and made known to Akbar Khan the success of their mission. Captain Skinner returned with them.

The morning of the 23rd of December found Macnaghten restless and excited. A great crisis had arrived. That day was to decide the fate of the British force, and determine the question of the loss or the salvation of our national honour. It is probable that the morning brought with it some doubts and misgivings; but he brushed the obtrusive thoughts aside, and endeavoured to persuade

himself, as he did to persuade others, that there was no treachery to be feared.

Having breakfasted, he sent for the officers of his staff —Lawrence, Trevor, and Mackenzie—who were his friends and counsellors, to whom on all occasions but this he had entrusted his designs—to accompany him to the conference with Akbar Khan. Mackenzie, finding him alone, heard from him now, for the first time, the history of this new negotiation, and at once exclaimed that it was a plot. "A plot!" replied the Envoy, hastily; "let me alone for that—trust me for that!"

He had braced himself up with desperate courage for the conference which was to be followed by such great results; and now he sent for the General to acquaint him with the nature of the proposals and to request his aid to carry the scheme into effect. Startled by the announcement, and little comprehending all the depths and intricacies of the perilous game which the Envoy had now in hand, Elphinstone asked what part the other Barukzyes, who had been foremost in the previous negotiations, were to take in those now on foot, and was told in reply that they were "not in the *plot*." On the untutored ear of the single-minded veteran this significant monosyllable smote with an ominous sound. He began now to understand the double game which was being played by the Envoy on one side, and the young Barukzye Sirdar on the other, and he eagerly asked the former if he did not apprehend that some treachery was at work. "None at all," said Macnaghten, in reply; "I wish you to have two regiments and two guns got ready, as speedily and as quietly as possible, for the capture of Mahmood Khan's fort; the rest you may leave to me." But still the General spoke of the danger of such machinations, and urged him to pause before he committed himself irretrievably to so perilous a course. Elphinstone had un-

fortunately been talking about danger so incessantly since the very commencement of the outbreak, that now, when he uttered only words of common sense and prudence, the warning notes fell upon Macnaghten's ears like the old imbecile croakings of timidity and irresolution which had been irritating him for so many weeks, and he now turned away with impatience, saying, "I understand these things better than you." * Elphinstone went; but in spite of Macnaghten's confidence, he could not dispossess himself of the belief that treachery was brewing, and that the Envoy was rushing upon destruction. So, hoping that yet something might be done to arrest him, he sate down and wrote him a letter, pointing out the danger of dividing the force; dwelling upon the probable treachery

* "On the morning of the 23rd," says General Elphinstone, "I received a note from the Envoy, saying that he hoped he had made an arrangement which would enable us to remain in the country; and that he would shortly acquaint me with all the particulars. I soon afterwards received a message from him, desiring to see me, when he informed me that he had made an arrangement with Mahomed Akbar, by which Shah Soojah would remain on the throne—Mahomed Akbar being Wuzeer. He was to receive a large sum of money, and Ameen-oollah was to be delivered to us a prisoner. I then asked what part Newab Zeman Khan and Oosman Khan were to take in this? To which I received answer that they were not in the plot. I replied that I did not like the word 'plot'—that it was an ominous one—and I begged to know if there were no fear of treachery? The Envoy's reply was, 'None whatever—I am certain the thing will succeed. What I want you to do is to have two regiments and guns got quickly ready, and, without making any show, to be prepared the moment required to move towards Mahmood Khan's fort.' I further discussed with him the danger he was incurring; but he replied, 'Leave it all to me —I understand these things better than you do.' I then left him, and he shortly afterwards proceeded with his suite and a few of his cavalry escort to the interview. Before we separated, I asked him if there was anything else I could do? He replied, 'Nothing, but to have the two regiments and two guns in readiness, and the garrison to be on the alert;' which was accordingly ordered."

of the Afghans, of whom he said the cantonments were full; and asking what guarantee there was for the truth of all that had been said. It was the last letter ever addressed to the Envoy. It never reached its destination.

About the hour of noon the little party—Macnaghten, Lawrence, Trevor, Mackenzie, and a few horsemen—set out on their ill-omened expedition. Shelton had been invited to accompany them; but he was occupied in getting ready the two regiments and the guns, and was, therefore, unable to attend the conference.* The troops, however, were not ready when the ambassadorial cavalcade rode out of the Seeah-Sungh gate, and the Envoy, observing the backwardness of the military chiefs, bitterly remarked that it was of a piece with all their arrangements since the commencement of the outbreak. He then went on to speak of the enterprise on which they were engaged; admitted that it was a dangerous one; said that he was playing for a heavy stake, but the prize was worth the risk that was to be incurred. "At all events," he said, "let the loss be what it may, a thousand deaths were preferable to the life I have of late been leading."

They passed out of cantonments. As they went, Macnaghten remembered that a beautiful Arab horse, which Akbar Khan had much coveted, and which the Envoy had purchased from its owner,† had been left behind.

* "On the morning of the 23rd," wrote Shelton, "about ten o'clock, I got an order to have two corps and some guns ready, to march out to seize, as I understood, the Logur chief. While thus occupied in giving it out, an invitation came from the Envoy to accompany him to an interview with the Sirdar. Being busy, I fortunately could not go, or should probably have shared the same fate."—[*MS. Records.*]

† Captain Grant, the adjutant-general of the Caubul force. "It seems," says Captain Mackenzie, "that Mahomed Akbar had demanded a favourite Arab horse belonging to Captain Grant, assistant adjutant-general of the force. To avoid the necessity of parting with the animal,

Mackenzie was sent back for it, that it might now be presented to the Sirdar. Lawrence was told to hold himself in readiness to ride to the Balla Hissar, to communicate with the King. There were many suspicious appearances which excited the apprehensions of all but the Envoy. Crowds of armed Afghans were hovering about the cantonment, and clustering in the neighbourhood of Mahmood Khan's fort. Macnaghten saw nothing but the prospect of escaping the disgrace of a sudden retreat from Afghanistan. He looked neither to the right nor to the left. He had a great object in view, and he kept his eyes steadily upon it. He did not even, when the chiefs met him, perceive that a brother of Ameen-oollah Khan was one of the party.

Near the banks of the river, midway between Mahmood Khan's fort and the bridge, about 600 yards from the cantonment, there were some small hillocks, on the further slope of which, where the snow was lying less thickly than on other parts, some horse-cloths were now spread by one of Akbar Khan's servants. The English officers and the Afghan Sirdars had exchanged salutations and conversed for a little while on horseback. The Arab horse, with which Mackenzie had returned, had been presented to Akbar Khan, who received it with many expressions of thanks, and spoke also with gratitude of the gift of the pistols which he had received on the preceding day.* It

Captain Grant had fixed his price at the exorbitant sum of 5000 rupees. Unwilling to give so large a price, but determined to gratify the Sirdar, Sir William sent me to Captain Grant to prevail upon him to take a smaller sum, but with orders that, if he were peremptory, the 5000 rupees should be given. I obtained the horse for 3000 rupees, and Sir William appeared much pleased with the prospect of gratifying Mahomed Akbar by the present."—[*Captain Mackenzie's Narrative: Eyre's Journal.*

* A handsome pair of double-barrelled pistols belonging to Captain Lawrence, of which Akbar Khan had expressed his admiration

was now proposed that they should dismount. The whole party accordingly repaired to the hill-side. Macnaghten threw himself, in a reclining position, on the bank; Trevor and Mackenzie, burdened with presentiments of evil, seated themselves beside him. Lawrence stood behind his chief until urged by one of the Khans to seat himself, when he knelt down on one knee, in the attitude of a man ready for immediate action. A question from Akbar Khan, who sate beside Macnaghten, opened the business of the conference. He abruptly asked the Envoy if he were ready to carry out the proposals of the preceding evening? "Why not?" asked Macnaghten. The Afghans were by this time gathering around in numbers, which excited both the surprise and the suspicion of Lawrence and Mackenzie, who said, that if the conference was to be a secret one, the intruders ought to be removed. With a movement of doubtful sincerity some of the chiefs then lashed out with their whips at the closing circle; but Akbar Khan said that their presence was of no consequence, as they were all in the secret with him.

Scarcely were the words uttered, when the Envoy and his companions were violently seized from behind. The movement was sudden and surprising. There was a scene of terrible confusion, which no one can distinctly describe. The officers of the Envoy's staff were dragged away, and compelled each to mount a horse ridden by an Afghan chief. Soon were they running the gauntlet through a crowd of Ghazees, who struck out at them as they passed. Trevor unfortunately slipped from his insecure seat behind Dost Mahomed Khan, and was cut to pieces on the spot, Lawrence and Mackenzie, more fortunate, reached Mahmood Khan's fort alive.

at a previous meeting, and which had accordingly been presented to him.

In the meanwhile, the Envoy himself was struggling desperately on the ground with Akbar Khan. The look of wondering horror that sat upon his upturned face will not be forgotten by those who saw it to their dying day. The only words he was heard to utter were, "*Az barae Khoda*" ("For God's sake"). They were, perhaps, the last words spoken by one of the bravest gentlemen that ever fell a sacrifice to his erring faith in others. He had struggled from the first manfully against his doom, and now these last manful struggles cost the poor chief his life. Exasperated past all control by the resistance of his victim, whom he designed only to seize, Akbar Khan drew a pistol from his girdle—one of those pistols for the gift of which only a little while before he had profusely thanked the Envoy—and shot Macnaghten through the body. Whether the wretched man died on the spot—or whether he was slain by the infuriated Ghazees, who now pressed eagerly forward, is not very clearly known—but these miserable fanatics flung themselves upon the prostrate body of the English gentleman, and hacked it to pieces with their knives.

Thus perished William Hay Macnaghten; struck down by the hand of the favourite son of Dost Mahomed. Thus perished as brave a gentleman as ever, in the midst of fiery trial, struggled manfully to rescue from disgrace the reputation of a great country. Throughout those seven weeks of unparalleled difficulty and danger he had confronted with stedfast courage every new peril and perplexity that had risen up before him; and a man of peace himself, had resisted the timid counsels of the warriors, and striven to infuse, by the manliness of his example, some strength into their fainting hearts. Whatever may be the judgment of posterity on other phases of his character, and other incidents of his career, the historian will ever dwell with pride upon the unfailing courage

and constancy of the man who, with everything to discourage and depress him, surrounded by all enervating influences, was ever eager to counsel the nobler and the manlier course, ever ready to bear the burdens of responsibility, and face the assaults of danger. There was but one civilian at Caubul; and he was the truest soldier in the camp.

It is not easy to estimate correctly the character of William Macnaghten. Of the moral and intellectual attributes of the ill-fated Envoy very conflicting accounts have been rendered; and it is probable that in all these conflicting accounts some leaven of truth resides. There are few men whose characters are not made up of antagonistic qualities, and Macnaghten was not one of the few. In early life he had distinguished himself by the extent of his philological acquirements; and was reputed as one of the most accomplished Oriental scholars in the presidencies of India. With a deep insight into the character of the natives of the East was blended the kindliest sympathy and toleration towards them. In the knowledge, indeed, of the native languages, the institutions, and the character of the people of Hindostan, he was surpassed by none of the many accomplished officers who have made them their study. His long connexion with the judicial department of the public service had afforded him opportunities, which his temper and his taste led him to improve, of maturing and perfecting this essential branch of official knowledge. In attention to business he was one of the most unwearying of men: his pen was ever in his hand; he wrote rapidly, and expressed himself on most subjects with clearness; he was quick in his apprehension of the views of others, and accommodated himself with facility to shifting circumstantes. But at this point there are many who believe that they cease to tread upon undebateable ground. It is admitted that

he was an accomplished Oriental scholar, a good judicial officer, an apt secretary, and a kind-hearted man; but it is denied that, in any enlarged acceptation of the word, he is entitled to be called a statesman.

Sir Alexander Burnes was constantly writing to his friends in India, "Macnaghten is an excellent man, but quite out of place *here*." Burnes was not an unprejudiced witness; and he, doubtless, expressed himself in language too sweeping and unqualified. But there are many who believe with Burnes, that Macnaghten was out of his place in Afghanistan. It is hard to say who would not have been more or less out of place, in the situation which he was called upon suddenly to occupy. The place, indeed, was one to which no English officer ought to have been called. For a Calcutta Secretary to be at Caubul at all was necessarily to be out of place. If Macnaghten, suddenly transplanted from the bureau of an Anglo-Indian Governor to the stirrup of an Afghan monarch, is chargeable with some errors, it is, perhaps, more just, as it is more generous, to wonder not that those errors were so numerous, but that they were so few. To govern such a people as the Afghans through such a King as Shah Soojah, was an experiment in which an English officer might fail without the sacrifice of his reputation. When we come to think, now, of what was attempted, we cease to marvel at the result. The marvel is, that utter ruin did not overtake the scheme at an earlier date—that the day of reckoning was so long delayed. The policy itself was so inherently faulty that success was an unattainable result.

The causes of the failure are not to be sought in the personal character of the Envoy. That character may have been one of many accidental circumstances which may in some sort have helped to develop it; but, sooner or later, ruin must have overtaken the scheme, let who

might be the agent of it. In this view of the case Macnaghten is not to be acquitted; but it is on Macnaghten the Secretary, not on Macnaghten the Envoy, that our censures must then descend. Macnaghten the Envoy, however, was not free from human infirmity. Most men have an unhappy faculty of believing what they wish to be true. In Macnaghten this propensity was unnaturally developed. God had cursed him with a strong delusion that he should believe a lie. He believed in the popularity of Shah Soojah and the tranquillity of Afghanistan. To have admitted the non-existence of either, would have been to have admitted the failure of the policy which he had recommended, and with which he was, in no small measure, personally identified. But Macnaghten did not seek to deceive others: he was himself deceived. When he spoke of the popularity of Shah Soojah, he believed that the Shah was popular; when he reported the tranquillity of Afghanistan, he believed that the country was tranquil. He was sincere, but he was miserably mistaken. Everything he saw took colour in his eyes from the hues of his own sanguine temperament. From the day when on entering Candahar he beheld a joyous people welcoming their restored monarch with feelings almost amounting to adoration, to the last luckless day of his life, when he went out to the fatal conference, firmly believing in the good faith and good feeling of his Afghan allies, he continued steadily to create for himself all kinds of favourable omens and encouraging symptoms, and lived in a state of blind confidence unparalleled in the history of human infatuation. To this self-deception some of the finest qualities of his nature largely contributed. The very goodness of his heart and generosity of his disposition moved him to regard the character and conduct of others with a favour to which they were seldom entitled. Macnaghten was too noble-

minded to be suspicious—but he erred on the other side; he wanted some of the sterner stuff which will not suffer the soundness of the judgment to be weakened by the generosity of the heart.

When not blinded by his partiality for any pet projects of his own, he was by no means wanting in political sagacity. He could decide justly, as he could promptly, on points of detail as they rose up one by one before him; but as soon as anything occurred to cast discredit upon the general policy of the Afghan expedition, by indicating the germs of failure, he resolutely refused to see what others saw, and censured those others for seeing it. Hence it was that he received coldly, if not contemptuously, those elaborate general reviews of the condition and prospects of Afghanistan which Burnes and Conolly thrust upon him, and resented every effort that was made by Rawlinson and others to draw his attention towards the unquiet and feverish symptoms which, from time to time, developed themselves in different parts of the unsettled country. His correspondence indicates an unwillingness, rather than an inability, to take any large and comprehensive views of Afghan policy. He seems to have shrunk from applying to that policy the test of any great principles; and to have addressed himself rather to the palliation of accidental symptoms than to the eradication of those constitutional diseases which were eating into the very life of the government which he directed.

Of Macnaghten's humanity I have never entertained a doubt. But it is a proof of the inconsistency even of the kindest and most amiable characters, that the Envoy, when greatly disquieted and perplexed by the difficulties which thickened around him, and irritated by the opposition, which he could not subdue, sometimes thought of resorting to measures repugnant to humanity, for the suppression of evils which baffled all the more lenient

efforts of legitimate diplomacy. But these sterner feelings soon passed away; and all the more generous sentiments of his nature held dominion over him again. He regretted the excesses—always rather those of word than of deed—into which he had been momentarily betrayed, and was as merciful towards a fallen enemy as he had been eager in his pursuit of a triumphant one. Macnaghten was anything but a cautious man; his first hasty impulses were often set down in writing with perilous unreserve; and it would be unjust to record against him, as his positive opinion, everything that he set down suggestively in his hasty letters to his numerous correspondents, or spoke out still more hastily to his friends.

Posterity may yet discuss the question, whether, in these last fatal negotiations with Akbar Khan, Macnaghten acted strictly in accordance with that good faith which is the rule of English statesmen, and for which our country, in spite of some dubious instances, is still honoured by all the nations of the East. In one of the last letters ever written by him, the Envoy said, "It would be very agreeable to stop here for a few months instead of to travel through the snow; but we must not consider what is agreeable, but what is consistent with our faith." On the same day, too—the day before his death—he had written, "I can never break that agreement (with the Barukzyes) so long as all the Khawanen wish me to stand by it." It has been questioned whether the negotiations he was then carrying on with the Ghilzyes and Kuzzilbashes were consistent with his obligations to the Barukzye Sirdars. The stipulations, however, on the part of the British diplomatist, in this case, extended no further than the promise of certain money payments in return for certain specific services, and Macnaghten may have considered himself justified in retaining those services conditionally on the rupture of the existing

covenant with the Barukzye chiefs. That covenant, indeed, was one of so precarious a nature—it was sliding away from him more and more certainly as time advanced—there was so little prospect of its obligations being fulfilled, that it seemed necessary to have something to fall back upon in the event of the open annulment of the treaty, the obligations of which had long been practically denied. Up to the evening of the 22nd of December, Macnaghten had been willing to abide by the stipulations of the treaty with the confederate chiefs; but there were such manifest symptoms of bad faith on the part of the chiefs constantly breaking out, that it appeared to him but ordinary prudence to prepare himself for an event so probable as an open rupture. He was ready to proceed, in mutual good faith, to the accomplishment of the original treaty; and so long as the chiefs adhered to their engagements, he was prepared to evacuate the country, but he believed that it was his duty to prepare himself also for a rupture with the chiefs, and to purchase supplies, wherever he could obtain them, for the use of the troops in the event of their retaining their position.

But the compact with Akbar Khan was altogether of another kind. There was nothing of a conditional character about it. The Envoy had, in the course of the day, virtually acknowledged that to break off the negotiations then pending with the chiefs would be a breach of good faith. Nothing had occurred between the hour in which he wrote this to Mohun Lal and that in which he received the overtures of Akbar Khan, to absolve him from obligations from which he was not absolved before. The same principle of diplomatic integrity which he had applied to the case of the Ghilzye alliance was doubly applicable to this: "It would be very agreeable to stop here for a few months instead of to travel through the snow; but we must not consider what is agreeable, but what is con-

sistent with our faith." If we read Macnaghten's subsequent conduct by the light of these high-principled words, it must in truth be pronounced that he stands self-condemned.

In estimating the character of these transactions, it should always be borne steadily in mind that the Afghan chiefs had from the first violated their engagements with the British, and exacted from them after-conditions not named in the treaty. Their want of faith, indeed, was so palpable, that Macnaghten would, at any time, have been justified in declaring that the treaty was annulled. It is plain, that whilst they were violating their engagements he was under no obligation to adhere to the conditions of the violated treaty. But it appears to me that this matter is altogether distinct from the question of the honesty of negotiating with one party whilst negotiations are pending with another. There would have been no breach of faith in breaking off the treaty with the confederate chiefs; but it was a breach of faith to enter into any new engagements until that treaty was broken off. It is certain that up to the time of his receipt of the fatal overtures from Akbar Khan, Macnaghten considered that he was bound by his engagements with the confederate chiefs. He might, it is true, have declared those engagements at an end, but until such a declaration was made, he was not at liberty to enter secretly into any new negotiations practically annulling the old.

And whatever objections may lie against the general honesty of the compact, it is certain that they apply with double force to that portion of it which involved the seizure of Ameen-oollah Khan. It is not to be justified by any reference to the infamous character of that chief. Ameen-oollah Khan was one of our "new allies." He had been, with the other chiefs, in friendly negotiation with Macnaghten. It was now proposed, during a sus-

pension of hostilities—whilst, indeed, we were in friendly intercourse with the Afghan chiefs, this very Ameen-oollah Khan included—that a body of troops should be got ready as quietly as possible for secret service, that a sudden attack should be made on the unsuspecting garrison of Mahmood Khan's fort, and that one of our allies—one of the chiefs with whom the Envoy was in treaty—should be violently seized. I confess that I cannot see anything to justify such a measure as this. It certainly was not in accordance with that good faith, the observance of which Macnaghten had declared to be of more importance than the retention of our position in the country.

But although I cannot bring myself to justify the act, either on the plea that the chiefs had not observed the engagements into which they had entered, or that Ameen-oollah Khan was an infamous wretch, and one of the arch-enemies of the British, it appears to me to be as little the duty of the historian severely to condemn the actor as to justify the act.* It is one of those cases in which the exercise of charity is a solemn duty—one of those cases, to the consideration of which every one should bring the kindliest resolution to weigh well the temptation before he measures the offence. There are cases to which, it is my deliberate conviction, a strict application of the ordinary rules of right and wrong would be a grievous injustice. It is easy, in one's closet, to sit in judgment upon the conduct of a man tempted far beyond the common limits of human temptation—environed and hemmed in by difficulties and dangers—overwhelmed with responsibility which there is no one to share—the lives of sixteen thousand men resting on his decision—the honour of his country at stake—with a perfidious enemy before him, a

* That it was not actually committed is, of course, nothing to the point. The question is to be argued as though the seizure of Ameen-oollah Khan had been a perpetrated act and not a baffled intention.

decrepit general at his side, and a paralysed army at his back—driven to negotiate by the imbecility of his companions, and then thwarted in his negotiations by the perfidy of his "new allies." But if, without injustice and cruelty, we would pass sentence on the conduct of a man so environed, we must ponder well all these environments, and consider what must have been the effect of seven wearing weeks of such unparalleled trial even on the strongest mind, and what must have been the temptation that arrayed itself before him, when there suddenly gleamed upon him a hope of saving at once the lives of his companions and the credit of the British nation. If, when that great temptation burst suddenly upon his path, and, dazzled by its delusive brilliancy, he saw the great object set before him, but did not see the slough of moral turpitude to be passed through before it could be attained, it is right that we should remember that Macnaghten, though a good and a brave man, was *but* a man after all, and that human strength, at the best, is but weakness to resist the pressure of overwhelming circumstance.

We have not the same intelligible guides to a right estimate of the conduct of Akbar Khan. If we regard the assassination of the British Envoy as a deliberate, predetermined act, it can only be said of it that it stands recorded as one of the basest, foulest murders that ever stained the page of history. But it does not appear that the murder of Macnaghten was premeditated by the Sirdar. It seems to have been the result of one of those sudden gusts of passion which were among the distinguishing features of the young Barukzye's character, and which had often before betrayed him into excesses laden with the pangs of after-repentance. The seizure of the Envoy and his companions, which was designed by the Sirdar, was an act of deliberate treachery, which the chiefs would perhaps endeavour to justify by declaring

that they only designed to do towards the Envoy as the Envoy had declared himself willing to do towards Ameen-oollah Khan.* But whilst Macnaghten had only consented to a proposal made to him by others—whilst he had merely yielded to temptation, and at the instance of one Afghan chief consented to the betrayal of another—Akbar Khan, with deliberate subtlety and malice, wove the net which he was to cast over the deluded Englishman, and treacherously enclosed him in the toils. The trap was cunningly laid and craftily baited; and the unhappy Envoy, all his perceptions blunted by the long-continued overstraining of his mind, fell readily into the snare, and went insanely to his undoing. Like Burnes, he had been warned of the treachery that encompassed him; and like his ill-fated colleague he had disregarded the warnings that might have saved him. The brave confidence of Macnaghten clung to him to the last; his sanguine temperament, at one time so dangerous and disastrous, at another so noble and inspiriting—which more than anything else had sustained the character of the nation throughout the sore trials which it had brought upon us—lured him at last to his death.

* It appears to have been Akbar Khan's intention to have seized the person of the Envoy, and to have held him as a hostage, to secure both the evacuation of Afghanistan and the restoration of Dost Mahomed. I have been informed that, during the struggle, a cry was raised hat the English were coming out of cantonments, and that Akbar Khan, thinking that he might still be baffled, in a sudden gust of passion drew out a pistol and fired.

CHAPTER II.

[December, 1841—January, 1842.]

The Capitulation—Supineness of the Garrison—Negotiations resumed—Efforts of Major Pottinger—Demands of the Chiefs—The Final Treaty—Humiliation of the Garrison—General Remarks.

It is recorded, that on the 23rd of December, 1841, the representative of the British Government was slain at a conference with the Afghan Sirdars, within sight of the British cantonments at Caubul; and it is now to be added to the record that this—the foulest indignity that one nation can put upon another, the murder of an ambassador in the performance of his ambassadorial duties—roused not the dormant energies of the military chiefs, or awakened them to a sense of the depths of humiliation in which they were plunging their unhappy country. The British Envoy was killed, in broad day, and upon the open plain, but not a gun was fired from the ramparts of the cantonment; not a company of troops sallied out to rescue or to avenge. The body of the British Minister was left to be hacked to pieces, and his mangled remains were paraded, in barbarous triumph, about the streets and bazaars of the city.

The military chiefs assert that they did not know, until the day after his death, that Macnaghten had been murdered. Elphinstone says it was thought by himself and others that the Envoy had proceeded to the city for

the purpose of negotiating.* But there were those in cantonments who had seen the tumult at the place of conference, and who knew that some violence had been committed. One officer said that he distinctly saw the Envoy fall; and that afterwards he could see the Ghazees hacking to pieces the body of the murdered man. If the General did not tremble for the safety of the political chief, he was the only man in the garrison who encouraged the belief that the lives of the Envoy and his companions, if they had not been already sacrificed, were not now in imminent danger. There was something very remarkable, if not suspicious, in the unwonted confidence of the General at this time. It was not his habit to look upon the bright side of things, or to take any great pains to encourage and reassure the troops under his command. He had, on almost every occasion, taken the most desponding view of affairs, and freely expressed his apprehension of dangers, which had no existence save in his own mind. But now he sent round his Adjutant-General to the troops to assure them of the Envoy's safety. They were all under arms. Captain Grant rode to the head of each regiment, and by Elphinstone's orders told them that the conference had been interrupted by the Ghazees—that the Envoy and his companions had been removed to the city—but that they would return immediately to cantonments. Some who heard this

* "Some time after I had given the necessary orders (for the two regiments and the guns), Captain Anderson came to me and said, 'They have seized the Envoy;' and one of the escort at the same time said, 'They have seized the Lord Sahib and taken him off to the city.' By myself and others it was thought at the time that Sir William had proceeded to the city for the purpose of negotiating. I was also told that a few shots had been fired. The garrison was got ready and remained under arms all day."—[*Statement of General Elphinstone.*]

authoritative announcement still believed that they would never hear the Envoy's voice, or look upon his living face again. The whole garrison was in a state of painful excitement; and when the shades of evening fell over the cantonment, and still no certain intelligence of the fate of Macnaghten had arrived, not an officer joined the mess-table of his regiment, or sate down to his solitary meal, without a leaden weight of gloom and despondency at his heart.

The day, indeed, had been one of intense anxiety. It had been, too, a busy stirring time within the cantonment walls. The authorities seem to have been stimulated into something of activity at home, though they could not bring themselves to do anything abroad. They got up a little war against the Afghans, whom business or curiosity had brought into cantonments, and who were now either eagerly trafficking or idly looking about them in the square. They had been doing the same, and more, for many weeks—at a time, too, when danger resulted from their spying the nakedness of the land. But now that this danger had passed, the military authorities began for the first time to think of expelling the Afghans from cantonments. All the men of rank who could be found were placed under arrest; whilst hundreds of less note, apprehending that a similar fate might be awaiting them, rushed towards the different gates, jostling and upsetting each other on the icy ground, and creating a scene of indescribable confusion in their efforts to escape. A lull succeeded; but as the evening advanced, the noise and confusion in the city were such that the troops were again turned out and the cantonment-works manned, in expectation of coming dangers. The Ghazees were mustering, in the belief that the British troops would attack the city and avenge the murder of their ambassador. But all thought of doing had long ago passed

away from the minds of our military chiefs. They had settled down into the belief that now it had become their duty only to suffer.

With the morrow came a confirmation of the worst fears of those who never thought to see the Envoy re-enter the cantonment-gates. They waited for tidings of him, and tidings came at last. Though he had been killed almost within musket-shot of our ramparts, nothing had been done by the military chiefs to solve the painful doubts which perplexed them throughout that disastrous 23rd of December. It was thought that if they only waited long enough for it, some certain intelligence would come at last; and it came at last, on the afternoon of the 24th, in the shape of a letter from Captain Lawrence, and certain overtures from the confederate chiefs, seeking a renewal of the negotiations on the basis of the treaty initiated by the deceased Envoy.

As the game of negotiation was now to be commenced anew, it was necessary to secure the services of a new negotiator. There was a man then in cantonments of whom little had been seen or heard for some weeks, and of whom the chroniclers and journalists of the insurrection had up to this time made little or no mention, in connexion with the stirring scenes in which Macnaghten had been the chief actor, but to whom the garrison now turned as to the only man fitted to take the Envoy's place. Ever since his arrival from Charekur, Major Pottinger had been incapacitated from active employment by the wound he had received in the early part of November. The severity of his sufferings had necessarily been much increased by the hardships of his perilous journey from Charekur to Caubul, and during the greater part of the time since his arrival at the latter place he had been confined to his bed. But he was now, in the difficult conjuncture that had arisen, ready to bring all the manly

vigour and high courage which had done so much to roll back from the gates of Herat the tide of Persian invasion, to the new duty of endeavouring to rescue his country from the degradation in which it had been sunk by the faint hearts of the military chiefs.

The evening of the 24th saw Pottinger in council with General Elphinstone, Brigadiers Shelton and Anquetil, and Colonel Chambers, the four senior officers of the garrison. The chiefs had sent in a letter, sealed by Mahomed Zemaun Khan, Akbar Khan, Ameen-oollah Khan, Oosman Khan, and others, with a memorandum of the terms on which they were prepared to grant the army a safe conduct to Peshawur. This was now translated to the military officers, who were eager to conclude the engagement into which Macnaghten had consented to enter for the withdrawal of all the British troops from Afghanistan. Caubul, Candahar, Ghuznee, and Jellalabad were all to be immediately evacuated. Dost Mahomed was to be released from captivity, and restored, with all other Afghan prisoners, to his own country, while Shah Soojah was to remain, or to depart, as he might please; and in the event of his electing the former course, to receive an annual pension of a lakh of rupees. A certain number of English gentlemen were to be left behind as hostages for the evacuation of the country by the British troops, whilst certain Afghan chiefs were to accompany our retiring garrisons to guarantee their safe conduct to the frontier. Such were the main features of the treaty which Pottinger found in course of negotiation when the desperate game of diplomacy was placed in his hands. It need not be added that large sums of money were to be paid to the chiefs, as the price of the immunity which they pledged themselves to guarantee to our discomfited army on their retreat through the dreadful passes.

To Pottinger even these terms appeared deeply humiliating, and, had the military authorities consented to aid him, he would have rejected them with scorn and defiance. But he stood before the leaders of our army alone and unsupported. It was urged that further resistance was useless, and that Macnaghten had already pledged his country to the acceptance of the proposed terms. So the draft-treaty was sent back, with some notes of assent appended to the several articles. It would have been strange if the chiefs had not then risen in their demands —if they had not dictated to our unhappy people new terms more grievous than those which had already been accepted. Four additional articles were sent back with the original draft. The first stipulated that all the coin in the public treasury should be given up to the chiefs; the second, that the British should abandon all their guns but six; the third, that all the spare muskets should be left behind; and the fourth, that "General Sale, together with his wife and daughter, and the other gentlemen of rank who are married and have children," should be left as hostages at Caubul, until the arrival of Dost Mahomed and the other Afghan prisoners from Hindostan.

And thus sinking more and more deeply in the great slough of humiliation, the unhappy leaders of the Caubul force groaned through the festal Christmas season. No thought of the dear homes of England inspired them to uphold England's dearest honour. On the 26th of December, encouraging letters were received from Macgregor at Jellalabad, and from Mackeson at Peshawur, setting forth that reinforcements were on their way up from India, and urging the authorities at Caubul to hold out to the last. Addressed to Macnaghten, these letters were opened by one who had carried to Macnaghten's duties all Macnaghten's constancy and courage. He saw in these tidings fit opportunity to urge again upon the military

leaders the duty of continued resistance. Moreover, there were intestine feuds in the city; the enemy were weakened by disunion; Shah Soojah seemed to be gathering strength; and Oosman Khan, Barukzye, who really desired the salvation of the British force, had offered to conduct it safely to Peshawur for five lakhs of rupees. These facts were communicated to Elphinstone, who summoned a council of war. The two Brigadiers, Shelton and Anquetil, Colonel Chambers, and Captains Grant and Bellew, met the military and the political chief at the house of the former. Earnestly, and almost hopefully, Pottinger set forth these encouraging circumstances, and besought the military chiefs not to treat with the enemy. The reasons with which he enforced his request, were as weighty as the spirit which informed them was noble. He contended that they had no right to bind their government to future measures which might be injurious to the public welfare; that they had no right to order other commanding officers to abandon the trusts confided to them; no right to sacrifice large sums of public money to purchase their own safety. He contended, too, that the enemy were not to be trusted; that, in all human probability, they would betray us; and that it would be safer, therefore, as it would be more honourable, to make a great effort to occupy the Balla Hissar till the spring, or else to fight their way to Jellalabad, and there await the promised reinforcements.

Eldred Pottinger had not the gift of speech—had not a commanding presence; but there was natural eloquence in these plain soldierly words, and the resolute bearing of the man imparted dignity to his utterance of them. Almost was the General, though greatly enfeebled at this time by disease, roused into action by them. But Shelton vehemently contended that neither course suggested by Pottinger was practicable, and that it was better to pay

any sum of money than to sacrifice the force. In this opinion the council of war, true to the character of such assemblies, unanimously concurred. So grievously disappointed and mortified as he was, Pottinger renewed his diplomatic intercourse with the enemy, and proceeded to give effect to the terms of the hated treaty.

Captain Lawrence, who since his seizure at the fatal conference, had resided in the house of Akbar Khan in the city, was sent for to draw the bills, and on the 27th of December came into cantonments. Fourteen lakhs of rupees were then signed away. Then came a more dreadful concession. The enemy demanded the immediate surrender of our guns. All but six field-pieces, which were to be suffered to accompany the retreating force, were now to be given up to the triumphant Afghans. This was the sorest trial that the British garrison had yet been called upon to encounter. It burnt in our humiliation as with a brand of iron. The troops chafed under this crowning indignity; and the military chiefs, when the hour of surrender came, shrunk from the mortifying necessity of giving up to a barbarous foe those muniments of war, which soldiers of all nations honour, and some almost idolise. But they could not bring themselves to risk a renewal of the conflict by openly refusing to accede to the demand. So, Pottinger hoping, perhaps, that something might yet arise to break off the negotiations, determined to procrastinate. He began by giving up the Shah's guns, two by two, on successive days; but if this alleviated the pain of the concession, it did not really soften the disgrace.

From day to day, guns, waggons, small arms, and ammunition were surrendered to the enemy. The hostages, too, were given up. Lieutenants Conolly and Airey were already in the hands of the Afghans. Now Captains Walsh and Drummond, and Lieutenant War-

burton and Webb, were sent to join them in captivity.* The enemy were anxious to get some of the married families into their hands; but there was a general unwillingness on the part of the officers to suffer their wives and children to be cast upon the forbearance of an enemy supposed to be so cruel, so treacherous, and so unscrupulous. On the 29th, such of the sick and wounded as were believed to be unable to bear the fatigues of the march, were sent into the city; and two medical officers, Drs. Berwick and Campbell, were appointed to take charge of them.

On the 1st of January, 1842, the ratified treaty was sent in, bearing the seals of eighteen of the Afghan Sirdars. It contained all the stipulations already detailed, except that relating to the surrender, as hostages, of the English ladies. Even without this crowning indignity it was miserably degrading. There is nothing, indeed, more

* On these additional hostages being sent, Captains Skinner and Mackenzie, who had been detained in the city, were released. Captains Lawrence and Mackenzie have each drawn up a narrative of the circumstances attending their capture, and their detention in the city, the former in the house of Ameen-oollah, and the latter in that of Akbar Khan. Both the English officers owed their lives to the efforts of the chiefs, who, at much personal risk, defended them against the furious assaults of the *Ghazees*. "I must do Mahomed Akbar the justice to say," writes Captain Mackenzie, "that finding the Ghazees bent on my slaughter, even after I had reached his stirrup, he drew his sword and laid about him right manfully, for my conductor and Meerza Baoodeen Khan were obliged to press me up against the wall, covering me with their own bodies, and protesting that no blow should reach me but through their persons. Pride, however, overcame Mahomed Akbar's sense of courtesy, when he thought I was safe, for he then turned round to me, and repeatedly said, in a tone of triumphant derision, 'Shuma moolk-i-ma gereed' (You'll seize my country, will you?)" The conduct of Akbar Khan and other chiefs towards Lawrence and Mackenzie may be taken as a presumptive proof that the murder of the Envoy was not designed. His seizure, however, was deliberately planned between Ameen-oollah and Akbar Khan.

painful in all this painful history than the progress of the negotiations which resulted in the accomplishment of this treaty. The tone of the enemy throughout was arrogant, dictatorial, and insulting; whilst the language of our diplomatists was that of submission and self-abasement. It is so rare a thing for Englishmen to throw themselves upon the clemency and forbearance of an insolent foe, that when we see our officers imploring the Afghan chiefs "not to overpower the weak with suffering,"* we contemplate the sad picture of our humiliation with as much astonishment as shame. The disgrace rests on the military commanders. Pottinger, had he not been overruled in council, would have snapped asunder the treaty before the faces of the chiefs, and appealed again to the God of Battles.

There were other things, too, to humble us. The state of affairs in cantonments was something very grievous to contemplate. The Ghazees hovering round the walls were insulting our people at their very gates, and bearding them at the very muzzles of their guns. Intercepting the supplies of grain which the commissariat had purchased with so much difficulty, they drove off the cattle and ill-treated their attendants. The chiefs declared that they had no power to prevent these outrages, and told the British authorities that they should order the garrison to fire upon all who molested them. Officers and men alike were burning to chastise the wretches who thus insulted their misfortunes; but they were not suffered to fire a shot. The Afghans had triumphed over us so long with impunity that they now believed the Feringhees had sunk

* See remarks by the English on the 4th of the additional articles of the draft-treaty; which, with the ratified treaty, is given at length in the Appendix; with the notes both of the English and Afghan chiefs.

into hopeless cowardice, and had become as patient of injury and insult as a herd of broken-spirited slaves.*

* The following extracts from Captain Johnson's Journal will show better than anything else the indignities to which they were subjected: "*December* 28.—Very busy, buying camels and yaboos—the price of the former 160 rupees each. The Ghazees still infest our gates and insult us in every possible way—stop our supplies coming in from the town, and abuse and ill-treat those who bring them. No notice taken by our military leader, although our officers and soldiers are burning for revenge. Several of my native friends from the city come daily to see me, and all agree, without one dissenting voice, that we have brought the whole of our misfortunes upon ourselves, through the apathy and imbecility displayed at the commencement of the outbreak. They also tell me that our safety on the retreat depends solely on ourselves—that no dependence is to be placed on the promises of any of the chiefs, and more especially Mahomed Akbar Khan. Every one of them will now, that they are in a measure paid before-hand, do his utmost to destroy us. *December* 30.—A body of Ghazees made a rush at the rear gate of cantonments; but did not effect an entrance. More guns and ammunition made over to the enemy, or what are called our new allies. Precious *allies*, who are only waiting the opportunity to annihilate us! . . . . *December* 31.—The chiefs say they cannot control their men, and that if their people misbehave themselves at our gates, or around our walls, we must fire upon them. No orders, however, given by General Elphinstone to punish our insulting foe, who naturally attribute our forbearance to dastardly cowardice, and take every opportunity of taunting us with it. The error lies with our leader, not with our troops. Several camels laden with grain plundered close to the Seeah-Sung gateway, within a few paces of a gun loaded with grape, and a large guard of Europeans and Natives. No steps taken to recover the plundered grain or punish the offenders. How we must be despised by our miserable foe! Mahomed Zemaun Khan sent in word that some of the chiefs will be in attendance to escort us to Jellalabad to-morrow. In the evening another message came that we must halt another day. Every day's delay increases our difficulties on the road. *January* 1, 1842.—New Year's Day! God grant that we may never see such another. My kind friends, Naib Shureef, and Khan and Ali Reza Khan (both Kuzzul-bashes), sent me in secretly some very excellent cakes to carry with me on the road, as we shall not get a particle of firewood for cooking for a distance of ninety miles, ere we can get into a milder climate. How dreary a

All this was very hard to bear. Other trials, too, were upon them. All who had friends in the city—and many of our officers had among the Caubulees faithful and long-tried friends—were now receiving from them alarming intimations of the dangers that threatened them on the retreat. It was no secret, indeed, either in the city or in cantonments, that the promises of the chiefs were not to be depended on, and that treachery was brewing for the destruction of our wretched force. Mohun Lal warned Pottinger that the chiefs were not to be believed, and that unless their sons accompanied the army as hostages, it would be attacked upon the road. To this Pottinger replied: "The chiefs have signed the treaty, and their sons accompany us. As for attacking us on the road, we are in the hands of God, and him we trust." * Again, Mohun Lal wrote that the troops would be attacked as soon as they quitted cantonments; but it was too late now to recede. Other warning notes of still more ominous import were sounded at this time. Moollah Ahmed Khan told Captain Johnson, that Akbar Khan had sworn that he would obtain possession of the English ladies as a pledge for the safe return of his own wives and family; and annihilate every soldier of the British army, with the exception of one man, who should reach Jellalabad to tell the story of the massacre of all his comrades.†

But to those who pondered well the dangers that threatened the retreating force in the gloomy defiles be-

prospect we have before us—having to traverse ninety miles, and the greater part of this distance through snow now upwards of a foot deep and the thermometer at night below zero. Some negotiations still going on. All the firewood that was laid in for the winter's consumption expended, and almost every tree in cantonments cut down. They had long ago been stripped of their bark, and everything eatable, for the purpose of feeding our starving cattle."—[*MS. Records.*]

* *Letter of Mohun Lal to Mr. Colvin.*—[*MS. Records.*]

† *Captain Johnson's Journal.*—[*MS. Records.*]

tween Caubul and Jellalabad, there was something more terrible still than the vindictive treachery of the Afghan tribes. Ever since the 18th of December, snow had been falling heavily at intervals—sometimes from morning to evening, with terrible perseverance. It was now lying more than ankle-deep upon the ground. Already had the Sepoys and the camp-followers begun to faint under the cruel sufferings of a frosty winter, fearfully aggravated by the exhaustion of all the firewood in their reach. The trees in cantonments had already been cut down and consumed. What was once a flourishing grove or orchard (for they were mainly fruit-trees) had now become a desert. But the sufferings which these wretched men, transplanted from the torrid plains of Hindostan, were now enduring in the Caubul cantonment, seemed but faintly to foreshadow the misery of a long march through the dreadful snow. Even to the hardy people of the North such a march, it was known, must be a sore trial; but to the weak and effeminate strangers from the plains of Hindostan, who had followed our fortunes into those dreary regions, it seemed to threaten nothing short of absolute extermination.

Those few first days of January were days of painful doubt and anxiety. Every preparation for the march had been made by the garrison. For some time our officers had been gathering together and securing such property as they could take with them, and destroying what they were compelled to abandon. Every night, since the commencement of the new year, they had retired to rest, believing that the army would commence its march on the following morning; but the movement was delayed day after day, because the chiefs had not completed their promised arrangements for the safe conduct of the force. At last, on the evening of the 5th of January, the engineer-officer received instructions actually to commence the work,

which he had been so long in readiness to accomplish. He was ordered to cut an opening through the rampart-walls of the cantonment to allow the egress of the troops, more rapidly and less confusedly, than they could pass out through the gates. The chiefs had not sent the promised safeguard; but, contrary to the advice of Major Pottinger,* the military authorities determined to march out of their entrenchments. And so, on the following morning, the British force, beaten and disgraced, commenced its ill-fated retreat towards the provinces of Hindostan.

I have commented upon the various incidents of the Caubul insurrection as they have arisen, one by one, to claim the attention of the reader; and little now remains to be said in explanation of the causes which conduced to the calamitous and disgraceful defeat of a British army by an undisciplined and disunited enemy, who had no artillery to bring into the field. Whatever more remote causes of this lamentable failure may be found elsewhere, it is impossible to conceal or to disguise the one galling fact, that the British army at Caubul was disastrously beaten because it was commanded by an incapable chief. Whether that chief would have beaten the enemy, if the military arrangements for which he was not responsible had been better ordered—if the site of the cantonments had been more judiciously chosen, and its defences more effectively constructed, if all our magazines and godowns had been well located and well protected,—may still be an open question; but it appears to me that there is no question as to whether a commanding officer of the right stamp would have triumphed over these difficulties, and

* "On the 6th of January, the military authorities refused to wait for the safeguard; and notwithstanding my advice to the contrary, marched out of our entrenchments."—[*Major Pottinger's Budeeabad Report: MS. Records.*]

beaten the enemy in spite of them. The Caubul cantonments were very badly situated, and very ill-constructed for purposes of defence; but if our troops had been commanded by an officer with a robust frame, strong nerves, a clear understanding, and a proper knowledge of his business, as the chief of a mixed army of British and Hindostanee troops, they would have crushed the insurrection in a few hours, and demonstrated the irresistible power of British valour and British discipline.

It has been said that the British army was not beaten out of Caubul, but that it was *starved* out of Caubul. This is a belief that I would willingly encourage, if I could only bring my judgment to embrace it. But the fact is, that the army was driven out of Caubul for want of supplies, only because the troops would not fight, or were not suffered to fight, to obtain them. The Commissariat officers would have fed the troops, if the military authorities had not shamefully sacrificed their supplies,—if they had not ignominiously lost what was already in store; and ignominiously refused to make an effort to obtain fresh supplies from the surrounding country. The troops, indeed, fought neither to keep their food when they had it, nor to procure food when they had none. There was an alacrity only in losing. The imbecility which sacrificed the Bengal Commissariat Fort, on the 5th of November, and the miserable abandonment of the expedition to Khoja Rewash, on the 9th of December, are equally apt illustrations of the truth, that, if the army was starved out of Caubul, it was only because it courted starvation.

This is a very humiliating confession, but it is impossible, without a sacrifice of truth for the sake of administering to our national vanity, to avoid the mortifying conclusion that the Caubul army wanted food, only because it wanted vigour and energy to obtain it. If General

Elphinstone had thrown half as much heart into his work as Captain Johnson threw into his, the army would not have been starved out of Caubul. There is nothing sadder than the spectacle of a fine army sacrificed by the imbecility of an incapable general, and nothing more painful than to write of it. But such humiliating revelations are not without their uses. They operate in the way of warning. Never again, after this frightful illustration of the evils of a vicious system of routine, will the lives of sixteen thousand men, and the honour of a great nation, be placed in the hands of a senile commander, crippled by disease and enfeebled by suffering. It was General Elphinstone's misfortune that he was sent to Caubul. It was Lord Auckland's fault that he sent him there. General Elphinstone knew that he was incapable of performing worthily the duties of such a command, and he took the earliest opportunity of applying for relief from a burden of responsibility which he was not able to bear. Lord Auckland knew that he was incapable, for the attention of the Governor-General was strongly called to the fact; but he sent the infirm old General to Caubul, in spite of the representations that were made to him by men less jealous of the integrity of the roster than of the honour of their country. The British army was beaten at Caubul, because it was commanded by General Elphinstone; and it was commanded by General Elphinstone, because Lord Auckland decreed that it should be so.

General Elphinstone has left upon record a declaration of his belief that if he had been more worthily supported he would not have been beaten at Caubul. So long as he held the chief command in his own hands, he—and he alone—was responsible for all the operations of the army. He never relinquished the command. Though he did not take the field in person, every order emanated from him. To him the Envoy addressed himself; with him the Envoy

took counsel. It is possible that if the second-in-command had been an officer of a different stamp, the army would not have been so disastrously and ignominiously beaten; but this admission does not affect the question of responsibility. Brigadier Shelton, throughout the siege, held a subordinate situation. He was immediately under Elphinstone's orders; and though he may be chargeable with certain individual miscarriages—with certain errors in the executive management of details—he is not chargeable with the great comprehensive failure which has plunged his country into such a sea of disgrace. Of Shelton's faults I have not been unmindful; but when I have admitted all his perverseness, his arrogance, his contumacy, and expressed my belief that there was not another man in the British army so unfitted by nature for the post he occupied under such a General, the admission amounts to little more than this: that Brigadier Shelton was not the man to supply the deficiencies of General Elphinstone. It is only because General Elphinstone was so incapable himself that we come to canvass at all the merits of his second-in-command. History does not trouble itself much about seconds-in-command, when the chiefs are fit for their posts.

Unquestionably Elphinstone was not well supported. Macnaghten, in emphatic language, described the troops as "a pack of despicable cowards." On more than one occasion they forgot that they were British troops, and turned their backs upon the enemy. They did not fight, as they would have fought if they had been well commanded. But the commander had less reason to complain of his troops than the troops had to complain of their commander. It was the faint-heartedness of the commander, at the outset of the insurrection, that dispirited and unnerved the troops. If Elphinstone, on the 2nd of November, had struck a vigorous blow at the then inci-

pient rebellion, and proved himself, by his energy and resolution, worthy of the confidence of the troops, they would have had confidence in him and in themselves. But they were held in restraint by the backwardness of their leader; the forward feeling that then inspired them was crushed and deadened. There was nothing to encourage and to animate them, but everything to dishearten and depress. They saw that the enemy were suffered to triumph over and insult them—that the worst indignities were unresented, the vilest outrages unpunished. Thus abased they soon lost their self-respect, and forgot what was due to their colours and their country.

Brigadier Shelton has attributed to physical causes the deterioration of the troops; but it is rather to moral than to physical causes that that deterioration is to be ascribed. The troops would have borne up against continued harassing duty in cantonments — against cold, hunger, and fatigue; they would have kept up a brave heart under the sorest physical trials, if there had been no moral influences to sicken and to chill. They bore, indeed, their outward sufferings without complaining. Cold, hunger, and fatigue they could endure without a murmur; but the supineness of those who suffered them to be robbed and insulted under the very shadow of their guns filled them with burning indignation, which, in time, was succeeded by a reaction of sullen despondency. They felt that they were sacrificed to the imbecility of their commander; and, in time, under the sure process of moral deterioration, they became in all respects worthy of their chief.

Examples of individual heroism were not wanting. Wherever Englishmen congregate, there are surely to be found brave hearts and resolute spirits amongst them. There were many in that Caubul garrison who bore themselves throughout the perilous season of their be-

leaguerment in a manner worthy of the chivalry of the empire. When the retreating force commenced its miserable march towards the British provinces, it left behind it the remains of many brave men who had fallen nobly on the field of battle; and many brave men were now bracing themselves up in the desperate resolution to sell their lives dearly to the enemy, if treachery were at work for their destruction. But they who had been most eager to counsel a vigorous course of action, and who had felt most deeply the humiliation into which the feebleness of their chief had sunk them, were mostly officers of the lower grades; and though the opinions of captains and subalterns were sought, and offered when not sought, in a manner unprecedented in the annals of British warfare (but still short of what might have been justified by the magnitude of the crisis), they had no power to direct the current of events or to avert the evils which they clearly foresaw. Even Pottinger, with all the influence of recognised official position, and the prestige of an heroic character, could only lift up his voice in remonstrance against the sacrifice of national honour involved in the humiliating treaty with the Afghan Sirdars. The military chiefs were fixed in their determination to abandon Afghanistan, and to leave Shah Soojah to his fate.

CHAPTER III.

[November, 1841—January, 1842.]

Sale's Brigade—Evacuation of Gundamuck—Skirmishes with the Enemy—Occupation of Jellalabad—State of the Defences—Successful Sallies—The Fortifications repaired—Disastrous Tidings from Caubul—Summons to surrender—Arrival of Dr. Brydon.

WHILST Elphinstone was flinging himself into the snares of the enemy at Caubul, Sale was holding out manfully at Jellalabad. Whether the latter ought not to have returned to Caubul, or if such a movement were impossible, to have stood his ground at Gundamuck, is a question which military critics will long continue to discuss. That the appearance of this brigade at Caubul would have changed the aspect of affairs at that place, and in all probability rescued Elphinstone's unhappy force from destruction, and the national character from disgrace, there seems no reason to doubt. But it was the opinion of General Sale that his brigade could not reach Caubul. "My retracing my steps on that city," he says, "was, in a military sense, impracticable, since the first inevitable sacrifice would have been of the lives of 300 sick and wounded, whom I could not have left in depôt with the treasonable irregulars at Gundamuck, whilst my cattle was unequal to the transport of my camp-equipage, and my ammunition insufficient for protracted operations. In the position which I occupied, I could not absolutely command a day's provisions, or even water, and should have been hemmed in on every side by hostile tribes,

amounting to thirty or forty thousand men, part of whom might have seized Jellalabad, and reduced it to ashes; or, holding it, have left me no alternative but a disastrous retreat to Peshawur. I therefore came to the resolution of anticipating any movement of this kind, and, by possessing myself of Jellalabad, establishing a point on which the force at Caubul might retire if hardly pressed, and restoring a link in the chain of communication with our provinces."

This was written five months after the brigade had abandoned its position at Gundamuck. It does not, however, differ much from the statement of reasons sent to General Elphinstone only as many days afterwards.* But the fact is, that those few days had given a very different complexion to the aspect of affairs. It was on the 10th of November that Captain Macgregor, who for days had been perplexed by alarming rumours of native origin, received the first authentic intelligence of the outbreak at

* In this letter, written from Jellalabad (Nov. 15), General Sale says: "I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th instant, requiring the force under my command to move again upon Caubul. In reply, I beg to represent that the whole of my camp-equipage has been destroyed; that the wounded and sick have increased to upwards of 300; that there is no longer a single depôt of provisions on the route; and that the carriage of the force is not sufficient to bring on one day's rations with it. I have, at the same time, positive information that the whole country is in arms, and ready to oppose us in the defiles between this city and Caubul, whilst my ammunition is insufficient for more than two such contests as I should assuredly have to sustain for six days at least. With my present means I could not force the passes of either Jugdulluck or Koord-Caubul, and even if the *débris* of my brigade did reach Caubul, I am given to understand that I should find the troops now garrisoning it without the means of subsistence. Under these circumstances, a regard for the honour and interests of our government compels me to adhere to my plan already formed, of putting this place into a state of defence, and holding it, if possible, until the Caubul force falls back upon me, or succours arrive from Peshawur or India."

Caubul, coupled with an urgent requisition from the Envoy to bring back Sale's brigade. Some, at least, of the military objections urged against the movement by the General had not then begun to exist. The irregulars were not then known to be treasonable. The surrounding country was not then known to be hostile. Food was believed to be procurable. The brigade was at this time halted in the valley of Gundamuck. There was no more fertile spot than this between Caubul and Jellalabad. Orchards and vineyards, green fields and rippling streams, refreshed the eyes and gladdened the hearts of men who, for many weary days, had been toiling through arid defiles, under the shadow of dreary walls of rock. Here the brigade had encamped itself on the 30th of October, and looked forward to a brief season of repose.

Everything, indeed, at this time wore a most encouraging aspect. Provisions were freely coming into camp, and the Ghilzye chiefs were making their submission. "On the 31st," says Captain Macgregor, in his narrative of these events, "Burkutt Khan paid me a visit, and brought with him two of the rebel chiefs, Sadad Meer and Sir Biland Khan; they had returned to their allegiance, and delivered over to me sixteen camel loads of property (not very valuable) which had been plundered from some Rehwaree merchants; this property I made over to their owners. Aghur Khan Sahuk, a Ghilzye chief of considerable influence, and Attah Mahomed Khan Sahuk, joined me at Gundamuck, and established their Thanahs for the protection of the Caubul road within their respective boundaries from Seh Baba to near Jugdulluck. Burkutt Khan had reposted his Thanahs at Jugdulluck, and at this time there seemed to be a great promise of the Ghilzye country being shortly tranquillised." *

* *Captain Macgregor's Report: MS. Records.*

There was one exception, however, to the general amity which the chiefs seemed now inclined to offer to Macgregor. Meer Afzool Khan, Urz-Begee, who was the possessor of a fort and some circumjacent land at Mammoo-Khail, about two miles distant from Sale's camp at Gundamuck, had fled from Caubul, and having sent his family and his property to this fort, was now proceeding to garrison it, and, in aid of the rebel cause, to molest us by continued incursions upon our camp. On the 3rd or 4th of November,* certain intelligence of this movement was brought to Macgregor. He was then dining in the mess-tent of the Sappers. With him were George Broadfoot, who commanded the Sapper-corps (then ignorant of the fate of his brother at Caubul)—and Backhouse and Dawes, two stout-hearted officers of artillery. All were of opinion with Macgregor that no time should be lost in attacking the fort, before Afzool Khan had thrown his reinforcements into it. So the political officer went at once to the General's tent, and urged him to sanction the assault. His arguments were of no avail; and he returned only to announce his failure. It was then midnight. But the emergency was great; so Broadfoot and Backhouse went at once to the tent of Captain Havelock of the 13th Light Infantry—than whom there was no finer soldier or abler man in Sale's camp—and roused him from his bed to take counsel with them. The General had much confidence in his judgment, and was more likely to be moved by him than by any man in his force. Fortunately, Havelock was eager for the attack; and although he had already recommended it in vain, he undertook to renew his solicitations, and to the delight of Broadfoot and Backhouse partially succeeded. They desired an immediate movement upon the rebel fort, and would have

* Macgregor says the 3rd, Broadfoot the 4th. The former probably speaks of the first intelligence, the latter of its confirmation.

had the necessary troops ready to march at daybreak. But it was not until the fifth hour after noon that the force received its orders to march. The enemy fled at its approach, and the evacuated fort was garrisoned by a party of the Shah's troops under Captain Gerrard. A commanding position was thus wrested from the enemy, who were coming down to occupy it in force, and the moral effects of the achievement were as great as its immediate and material results. The spirits of the troops, which had begun to flag, rose rapidly; and the enemy awoke from their delusive belief that Sale was afraid to attack them.

Up to the day on which Macgregor received the pressing solicitations of the Envoy to bring back Sale's brigade to Caubul, circumstances, since the arrival of the force at Gundamuck, had been all in its favour. When, therefore, Macnaghten's letter was received, and they took counsel together as to the course it then became them to pursue, some at least of those strong reasons against the movement on Caubul, which Sale set forth in his official letters, had not yet been forced into being. A council of war was held, and the members of it were divided in opinion; but the majority pronounced against the movement for the rescue of Elphinstone's force. It was determined that the brigade should throw itself into Jellalabad. There was a middle course open to them—the retention of their position at Gundamuck; but it seems to have found no favour in their eyes. Had Sale's force remained in the valley of Gundamuck, it might have saved Elphinstone's army from annihilation on its fatal January retreat. As long as it was encamped there, the tendency of the Ghilzye chiefs was towards the establishment of friendly relations with the British; but no sooner had we determined to abandon our position, than the whole country broke out into hostility, and the passes were sealed. *

* It has been said (*Calcutta Review*, vol. xiv.) that the instructions

On the 11th of November, the brigade commenced its march towards Jellalabad. Sale had wisely determined to move with as little encumbrance of baggage as possible. He was partly, indeed, compelled to this by the depredations of the tribes who had swept off the bulk of his cattle whilst the animals were grazing on the plain. The injury inflicted upon us by their predatory adroitness was of a very doubtful character. The taste for baggage is ordinarily so strong that little short of absolute necessity compels its abandonment. Sale was forced to move lightly out of Gundamuck, and he found the advantage of the absence of the usual impediments before he had been long on the march.

To leave, however, any property at Gundamuck was virtually to sacrifice it. To the care of the Shah's irregulars posted in the cantonment all that could not be carried away was now consigned. As soon as Sale's brigade had commenced its march to Jellalabad the cantonment was attacked. True to their character, the Janbaz, who seem to have been raised for the express purpose of going over to the enemy, did it with their wonted address. The property left at Gundamuck fell into the hands of the Afghans; the cantonment was burnt to the ground; and all the surrounding country rose against us in open revolt.

Without any serious opposition, the march to Jellalabad was accomplished. On the morning of the 12th, however, soon after the brigade got under arms in the grey twilight, the tribes were seen clustering on the steep hills on either side, and soon poured themselves down on the rear-guard, vainly striving to sweep off the baggage. A running

sent to Sale were of such a character as to throw a large amount of responsibility upon him; and that Sale always shrank from responsibility,—but the letters from the Envoy to Macgregor were couched in unqualified and unconditional language, and the official letter from Elphinstone ordered Sale to return "*at all risks.*"

skirmish, which lasted for some miles, and brought out the fine qualities of our troops, their admirable discipline and steadiness under fire, the gallantry of their bearing, and the rapidity of their movements, ended in the complete dispersion of the depredators, and secured the safety of the remainder of their march. Clever were the manœuvres by which on that day Dennie drew the enemy into his toils, and heavy the retribution which descended upon them. Placing his cavalry in ambush, he brought up his infantry to the attack, ordered them to advance firing, and then wheeled them about, as though in panic flight. The stratagem succeeded to admiration. The enemy, after a brief pause of wonderment, believed they had accomplished a great victory, sent up a wild shout, and then rushed in pursuit of the flying Feringhees. They were soon in the clear open space to which Dennie had designed to lure them. The cavalry, whom they had laughed at on the hills, able now to operate freely, dashed at them with sudden fury. The slaughter was tremendous; the rout was complete. It was said of the British horsemen that day that "their right arms were wearied with the blows which they struck; and the quantity of dead that might be seen scattered over the face of the valley proved that they had not struck at random."*

On the morning of the 13th of November, Sale's brigade took possession of Jellalabad. The movement took the Afghans by surprise. They had believed that the Feringhees were making the best of their way to the provinces of Hindostan; and now their entrance into the city struck a panic into the hearts of the inhabitants. As the regiments marched in, the citizens fled out in dismay. Everything was abandoned to the British troops. There was no

* "*Sale's Brigade in Afghanistan.*" *By the Rev. G. R. Gleig, Chaplain to the Forces.*

need to fire a shot or to draw a sabre. Sale's brigade had now become the garrison of Jellalabad.*

Scarcely, however, had Sale made himself master of the place before it was surrounded by yelling crowds, who threatened death to the infidels if they did not at once abandon the town. The utmost caution was now necessary. The place, though surrounded by fortifications, was absolutely without any real defences; and the troops within its dilapidated walls and its filled up ditches, were almost as much exposed as in the open country. The extent of the works was very great, and it was quite impossible to man them. But guards were posted at all the gates; and a strong piquet planted in a central position, and ordered to hold itself in readiness to send supports to any point from which the sound of firing might proceed.† These arrangements made, the remainder of the troops were suffered to lie down to rest by companies, with their officers beside them, whilst Sale summoned the commanders of regiments and detachments to a council of war.

The question to be determined was this. There was the extensive, ill-defended city of Jellalabad; and in the midst of it was the Balla Hissar, or citadel, surrounded by a wall, sufficiently extensive to enclose the brigade without inconvenience, but yet not so extensive as to exhaust our means of defence. It was now debated whether it would be more expedient to abandon the town and concentrate our troops in the Balla Hissar, or to hold possession of the former.

* The place, at the request of Captain Macgregor, was officially given over to the British garrison by the nominal Governor, Abdool Rahman, who ruled the Jellalabad district in the name of Shah Soojah. Abdool Rahman continued for some time to reside in the town under Captain Macgregor's protection.—[*Captain Macgregor's Report: MS. Records.*]

† "*Sale's Brigade in Afghanistan.*" *By the Rev. G. R. Gleig.*

Weighty and very apparent were the arguments in favour of the occupation of the citadel; and for a time the council seemed inclined towards the adoption of that securer course; but to Dennie and others it was clear, that the abandonment of the city would be a virtual acknowledgment of weakness, and that it would have a far better political effect, as it would a more becoming military appearance, to hold the city itself, than to be cooped up within the walls of the citadel. And so it was at last determined that the city should be held, and the enemy resolutely defied.

But to hold the city it was necessary that the defences should be repaired. Well might Sale look with dismay at their condition, and almost regard it as a wild hope ever to look for the completion of the work that he had marked out for his little garrison. "I found the walls of Jellalabad," he said, "in a state which might have justified despair as to the possibility of defending them. The *enceinte* was far too extensive for my small force, embracing a circumference of upwards of 2300 yards. Its tracing was vicious in the extreme; it had no parapet excepting for a few hundred yards, which, there, was not more than two feet high earth; and rubbish had accumulated to such an extent about the ramparts, that there were roads in various directions across and over them into the country. There was a space of 400 yards together, on which none of the garrison could show themselves excepting at one spot: the population within was disaffected, and the whole *enceinte* was surrounded by ruined forts, walls, mosques, tombs, and gardens, from which a fire could be opened upon the defenders at twenty and thirty yards."*

The first thing now to be done was to appoint a committee of officers to examine and report upon the works of the place. On the 13th of November, Captain Broadfoot,

* *General Sale to Secretary to Government, April* 16, 1842.

who commanded the corps of sappers, with some other officers, went round the dilapidated works. Broadfoot alone succeeded in making the circuit of them. "Large gaps cut off the communication, or insecure footing compelled the officers to descend among the adjoining enclosures, from which it was difficult to find the way; whilst on the south side the rampart was so embedded in houses and surrounded by them, that its course could only be traced by laboriously threading the lanes of the native town. On the north side the wall rose to a very great height *towards the town*, but sloped down to the exterior in a heap of ruins almost everywhere accessible; while at the foot were houses and gardens so strongly occupied by the enemy, that during the night of the 13th of November our troops were unable to maintain their posts; and with the exception of the gateway, a line of four hundred yards on the northern face was without a man on the works. Had the enemy then attacked us, we must have been reduced to a street combat."*

Broadfoot, now appointed garrison engineer, set about the work entrusted to him with all the energy and zeal for which his character was distinguished. His little corps of sappers had brought with them their pickaxes, shovels, and other working tools from Caubul; and were now ready to ply them with the heartiest good-will. There was not a soldier in garrison, European or Native, who was not eager to join in the work. Wood was to be collected; and iron was to be collected; for there were no available supplies of either. But from the ruins of old houses in the cantonment and in the town the former was extracted in sufficient quantity, and the neighbouring country supplied the latter.† Every difficulty was overcome as it arose. Impossibilities did not grow in Jellalabad.

* *Captain Broadfoot's Report—Jellalabad, April* 16, 1842.

† "The iron," says Broadfoot, "was good in quality, but imper-

But before our soldiers could carry on their work in safety upon the ramparts, it was necessary to give the enemy, who assembled in great force beyond the walls of the city, a taste of our military strength. The morning of the 16th of November was an exciting, and it proved to be a glorious one. On the preceding evening it had been determined that Colonel Monteith, of the 35th Bengal Infantry, a true soldier and a good officer, should take out eleven hundred men, at daybreak, and give battle to the molesting Afghans. As soon as the early dawn would suffer him to take a survey of surrounding objects, Monteith ascended to the flat house-top of one of the most commanding edifices in the city, and looked around, with a keen soldier's eye, upon the expanse of hill and plain, of garden and of vineyard, traced the course of the river, and marked the castles of the chiefs which dotted the adjacent country. He saw, too, what was of more importance still —the dispositions of the enemy. There seemed to be about 5000 fighting men, gathered together, some on the hill-sides, some in the enclosures on the plain; and though they were kept together by little discipline, there seemed to be some sturdy qualities about them, and they were, at all events, well armed. Monteith learnt all that could be learnt from that commanding position, and then he went down to place himself at the head of his men.

The little force was well composed and well commanded. The remaining men of the garrison were under arms; and the guns, which Monteith did not take with him, were posted on the ramparts to cover his advance. Nothing could have been more gallant or more successful than the attack. What the artillery commenced, the infantry followed up bravely, and the cavalry completed. The enemy were beaten at all points. The wretched Janbaz,

fectly smelted, and requiring ten times as much labour and time as English iron."

who had gone over to the insurgents at Gundamuck, now met the men of the 5th Cavalry in fair fight, and were hewn down remorselessly by them. In a little time the panic was complete. The British horsemen, following up our successes, flung themselves upon the flying Afghans on the plains, and slaughtered them as they fled. Then the bugle sounded the recall: Monteith brought his men together, flushed with success, and the whole returned, in joyous spirits, to the city. The Afghans were checked at the outset of their career of insolence and intimidation, and for many a day kept themselves quietly in their homes.

Then the work of defence proceeded apace. Broadfoot was toiling all day long to repair the decayed ramparts and clear out the ditches, which, ditches no longer, had been filled up to the consistency of thoroughfares. Abbott, who had been appointed commissary of ordnance was getting his guns into position, and making up his ammunition as best he could from the materials to be found in the neighbourhood. Macgregor, with his wonted activity, was playing the part of the commissariat officer—and playing it well—bringing all his political influence, which was great, to bear upon the important business of the collection of supplies. And so successful were his exertions—so successful were the efforts of the foraging parties, which went out from time to time in search of grain, sheep, firewood, and other essentials—that in a little while a month's provisions were in store. It is true that the men were on half-rations; but they did not work the worse for that. It was never said at Jellalabad that the soldiery were unequal to their accustomed duties because they had not their accustomed supplies of food. The gallant men who composed the garrison of Jellalabad, took their half-rations cheerfully, and cheerfully did double work.*

* Cheerfully, too, worked the Europeans without their accustomed

Not again, until the 1st of December, was the mettle of Sale's brigade tried in the open field. For some days before, the enemy had been hovering about and threatening the garrison, who, chary of their ammunition, which was running scarce, gave back nothing in reply to the desultory fire of the Afghans. But on the 1st of December they appeared in such formidable array, and grew so bold and menacing—closing in nearly and more nearly about the walls, until the workmen on the ramparts could not safely perform their accustomed duties—that Sale could no longer refrain from sending out his fighting men against them. Monteith, an officer of the Company's service, had led the attack on the 14th of November. Now, the direction of the sortie was entrusted to an officer of the Queen's army, who had already, on more than one occasion, shown his capacity for command. Dennie led out the garrison this time; and gallantly they moved to the attack. It was mid-day when they sallied out with a cheer, and fell upon their besiegers. It were scarcely truth to say that a battle was fought on that 1st of December. The affair began and ended with the rout of the Afghans. Two guns of Abbott's battery were unlimbered, and with murderous execution poured in their thick showers of grape upon the discomfited mass. They, who had of late been so bold and defiant, now fled in wild confusion, but could not escape the sabres of our cavalry, who charged them home, and drove them across the plain into the river, whilst our infantry pursued them up the hill-sides, and fell upon them with their gleaming bayonets. And so, without the loss of a single man, Dennie dispersed

drams. There were no ardent liquors in Jellalabad; and the consequence was, that the men enjoyed, even on half-rations, an amount of health and strength and elasticity, and preserved a regularity of discipline unknown to even the 13th, when the fire-water was served out to them.

the investing force; and not a trace of it was to be seen on the morrow except the dead bodies on the plain.

And now, with little or no interruption, the labours of the garrison proceeded, and the works began to assume an appearance of effective defence. In fine health, in good working condition, and in an admirable state of discipline, European and Native troops alike laboured with axe and shovel, and soon saw the mud-walls rising around them. Had they thought only of themselves, they would have toiled on, in high spirits as in high health. But the worst rumours were coming in from Caubul. It was plain that their fellow-soldiers at the capital were not achieving like honourable success. It was believed, too, that Sale and Macgregor knew more than they were willing to reveal. Men asked each other fearful questions; but beyond the leading outline of events, nothing was known that could be shaped into intelligible replies.

How it happened that such an army as that commanded by General Elphinstone had been so disastrously and disgracefully beaten in the field by an enemy of such calibre as these undisciplined Afghans, was a terrible mystery to the brave men who had been scattering their besiegers like sheep. They heard something of the want of provisions that had reduced the force to this melancholy strait; but, when Sale's brigade sate down in Jellalabad, it had only two days' provisions. They heard, too, that the extent and the weakness of the Caubul cantonments had paralysed the efforts of the garrison; but there, at Jellalabad, they had found their defences in a state of absolute ruin. It seemed to them easy to obtain provisions, and to build up their defences. At all events, they had done both; and the troops at Caubul were of three or four times their numerical strength.

Half of the month of December had worn away, when a whisper went round the garrison that the Caubul force

had capitulated. With mingled feelings of incredulity and indignation the humiliating intelligence was received. Sale and Macgregor knew only too well how Elphinstone and Shelton had been throwing away chance after chance of rescuing their miserable troops from destruction. But it was not wise to damp the spirits of their own gallant and successful garrison by any revelations of the unhappy manner in which their old comrades had been sacrificed at Caubul. When, therefore, on the 17th of December, it was known that some disastrous intelligence had been received from the capital, it was slowly believed that the main body of the British army in Afghanistan had thrown itself on the mercy of a barbarous foe.

But soon other intelligence of a grievous and afflicting character was conveyed to the garrison. At first it appeared only in the shape of a native rumour, which, though it seemed to swell into the substantial proportions of fact, was believed, with something perhaps of self-deception, by Macgregor, to be only a shadowy figment that he ought at once to dismiss from his mind. It was rumoured that the British Envoy at Caubul had been murdered, at a conference, by Akbar Khan; but Macgregor argued, when communicating, on the 30th of December, this report to the authorities below, that it was not likely Macnaghten would have gone unattended to a conference with the chiefs, or that Akbar Khan, whose father and family were in the hands of the British, would commit an act of such outrageous folly as to murder the representative of the British Government. But Macgregor's incredulity was soon dispersed. After three days of doubt, authentic tidings came in from Caubul to disquiet the hearts of the British chiefs at Jellalabad. On the second day of the new year, a letter was received from Major Pottinger, full of the most painful and disheartening intelligence. It announced the murder of

Macnaghten. It announced that the Caubul force was about immediately to abandon its position, and to fall back upon Jellalabad, with every prospect of being attacked by a faithless and infuriated enemy upon the way. Into a few sentences of terrible significance was crowded the record of these melancholy events. The letter was written on Christmas-day:

Caubul, December 25, 1841.

MY DEAR MACGREGOR,

We have had a sad Comedy of Errors, or rather tragedy here. Macnaghten was called out to a conference and murdered. We have interchanged terms on the ground he was treating on for leaving the country; but things are not finally settled. However, we are to fall back on Jellalabad to-morrow or next day. In the present disturbed state of the country we may expect opposition on the road, and we are likely to suffer much from the cold and hunger, as we expect to have no carriage for tents and superfluities. I have taken charge of the Mission. Mackenzie, Lawrence, and Conolly are all seized. The first two I fear for. The latter is quite safe. The cantonment is now attacked. Yours, very truly,

ELDRED POTTINGER.

With deep emotion the officers now discussed the dangers of this fearful retreat through the snow, and the too probable treachery of the chiefs; and there were those among them who predicted that Elphinstone's army would be cut to pieces by the enemy, or destroyed by the snow almost to a man. All this was very discouraging; but the Jellalabad garrison were not in a temper to be easily cast down. On they went from day to day, working cheerfully at the defences—never fearing for themselves, and, in spite of the evil prophecies of a few amongst them, hoping the best for their miserable comrades.

So passed the first week of January. To Sale and Macgregor they were days of intense anxiety. Eagerly as they looked for cheering intelligence from Caubul, nothing

came to refresh them with new hopes. On the 8th of January, another letter from Pottinger, dated the 28th of December, was received by Macgregor. It was written in French, as there were men in the enemy's camp who could read and interpret English;* and it announced

* I append the letter itself, as well as one, also in French, written two days afterwards to Mackeson at Peshawur:

"Cabool, 28me Déc. 1841.

"MON CHER MACGREGOR,

"Notre situation devient perilleuse de plus en plus; les forts à l'entour du cantonnement ayant été rendus aux chefs, selon le traité que le feu Envoyé et Ministre avoit commencé. Nous nous trouvons dans la necessité de renouveler les negociations depuis qu'il a été tué. Le manque de vivres, desquels ils ne nous restent que pour huit jours, et des moyens de transport pour nos malades et blessés, qu'ils nous ont promis de jour en jour, font autant de raisons de plus pour que nous faisons traité, s'il est possible. Mais aussi leurs promesses meritent si peu de foi, que peut-être nous serons obligés de battre de retraite sur Jellalabad; sur tout, qu'ils exigent que nous marchons par le route de Bungeish—demande que nous ne pouvons pas agréer.

"Pour ces causes alors, si vous avez reçu l'ordre de marcher du feu Envoyé et Ministre, il ne faut pas le faire à present, mais attendre jusqu'au temps que vous recevez nouvelle ordre d'ici, quand le traité de paix sera fait.

"Votre ami,

"ELDRED POTTINGER."

"Cantonnements à Cabool, 30me de Décembre, 1841.

"MON CHER MACKESON,

"J'ai eu le plaisir de recevoir votre lettre du 12me au feu Envoyé. Notre situation ici est des plus dangereuses. L'Envoyé était tué à une conférence, qui avait lieu hors d'ici, le 23 de ce mois. Quand je prenais charge je trouvais qu'il avait engagé du part du gouvernement de quitter Afghanistan, et de donner *hostages* pour que le Dost soyait mis en liberté, aussi que pour préliminaires il avait rendu le *Balla Hissar* et les forts qui dominent les cantonnements. *Ces acts* et le manque des vivres faisaient les cantonnements untenable, et les quatre officiers militaires supérieurs disaient qu'il fallait résumer le traité au lieu de forcer une marche rétrograde sur Jellalabad. Nous avons aujourd'hui finis les termes du traité, et nous espérons partir d'ici

that the position of the British force at Caubul was becoming more and more perilous—that the treaty commenced by the late Envoy was still being negotiated—that some delays had been occasioned by the difficulty, real or pretended, of providing carriage and provisions to enable the troops to commence their march; and that it was not improbable that, in spite of the promises of the chiefs, the British column would be compelled to fight its way down to Jellalabad. In conclusion, Pottinger spoke of instructions for the evacuation of Jellalabad that had been despatched by Macnaghten, but urged Macgregor to stand fast until the receipt of further orders from Caubul.

On the following day those further orders arrived. A few horsemen appeared under the walls of Jellalabad, one of whom was the bearer of a letter from the English authorities at Caubul, addressed to Captain Macgregor. It contained instructions for the evacuation of Jellalabad, couched in the following words:—

SIR, Caubul, December 29, 1841.

It having been found necessary to conclude an agreement, founded on that of the late Sir W. H. Macnaghten, for the evacuation of Afghanistan by our troops, we have the honour to request that you will intimate to the officer commanding at Jellalabad, our wish that the troops now at that place should return to India, commencing their march immediately after the receipt of this letter,

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demain ou après demain. De leur promesses je m'en doute, malgré que les ordres ont été expédiés pour que nos troupes quittent Candahar et Ghizny. Il faut que vous tenez ouvert le Khyber, et que vous soyez prêt nous aider le passage; car si nous ne sommes pas protégés, il nous serait impossible faire halte en route pour que les troupes se refraichissent, sans laquelle j'ai peur qu'ils soient désorganisés.

"Votre ami,

"Ελδρεδ Ποττινγερ.

"Après aujourd'hui j'écrirai mon nom en lettres Grecques. Lorsque le Cossid vous remettra cette lettre, vous lui donnerez trois cent rupees."

leaving all guns, the property of Dost Mahomed Khan, with the new Governor, as also such stores and baggage as there may not be the means of carrying away, and the provisions in store for our use on arriving at Jellalabad.

Abdool Ghuffoor Khan, who is the bearer of this letter, will render you all the assistance in his power. He has been appointed Governor of Jellalabad on the part of the existing government.

We have the honour to be, &c.,
ELDRED POTTINGER, in charge of Caubul Mission.
W. K. ELPHINSTONE, Major-General.

Macgregor laid the letter before Sale, and a council of war was held. It does not seem that there were many doubts and misgivings to agitate and perplex the brave men, who then asked each other whether they should cast further discredit on their country, by abandoning their post and flinging themselves into the snares of the enemy. It seemed to them that a bait had been laid to lure them to destruction. Macgregor knew that Akbar Khan had issued a proclamation to the chiefs of the surrounding country, calling upon them, as followers of the true faith, to rise and slay the Feringhees on the road; his voice was all for the retention of their post, and the military chiefs were of the same temper. Little time elapsed, therefore, before the following letter was written to Major Pottinger and General Elphinstone:—

Jellalabad, January 9, 1842.

SIRS,

We have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th ultimo, which you therein state was to be delivered to us by Abdool Ghuffoor Khan, appointed Governor of this place by the existing powers at Caubul. That communication was not delivered to us by him, but by a messenger of his; and though dated 29th of December, 1841, has only this moment reached us. I have, at the same time, positive information that Mahomed Akbar Khan has sent a proclamation to all the chiefs in the neighbourhood, urging them to raise their followers for the purpose of intercepting and destroying the forces now at Jellalabad. Under these circum-

stances we have deemed it our duty to await a further communication from you, which we desire may point out the security which may be given for our safe march to Peshawur.

We have the honour to be, &c.,

R. SALE, Major-General.

G. H. MACGREGOR, Political Agent.

It is right that Macgregor and Sale should be suffered to state in their own words, the motives which impelled them to adopt this worthy resolution. "The conduct," wrote Captain Macgregor sometime afterwards, "of Major-General Sir R. Sale and myself, in having declined, under the circumstances, to deliver up Jellalabad to Abdool Ghuffoor Khan, Barukzye, in conformity with the instructions contained in the letter to my address of the 29th of December, signed by Major Pottinger and General Elphinstone, has already been approved by government; but perhaps it may be proper here to relate a few of the causes which led to such a resolution. When the British authorities at Caubul had decided upon capitulating, and the terms of capitulation were in the course of negotiation, my spies informed me that letters had been received from Mahomed Akbar Khan and the Ghilzye chiefs, desiring the different tribes on the road to assemble to attack the British army, which was shortly to leave Caubul for India. This information was confirmed by the letter from Burkutt Khan. . . . . An intercepted letter from Mahomed Akbar Khan, which reached us at the same time, will serve to show the spirit with which he regarded us; therefore I felt convinced that treachery was intended by the Afghan chiefs, in which case our retaining possession of the fortress of Jellalabad became of incalculable advantage to the retreating force; and if it succeeded in reaching Jellalabad, strengthened as it would be by the garrison, we might yet have upheld our authority in Ningrahar, until an opportunity would have been afforded

to the British Government to reinforce us, so as to commence operations for the recapture of Caubul. The troops left Caubul on the 6th of January; and not until the 9th did we receive the letter in question. Their fate had been sealed ere that period; and had the requisition been complied with, Government would most undoubtedly have had to lament the destruction of the Jellalabad garrison as well as that of the Caubul force, the wishes of the enemy evidently being to inveigle us into their power, and then to do their worst towards us. Moreover, to have evacuated Jellalabad would have doubtless increased a hundred-fold the difficulties of re-establishing the British authority in this country, in the event of Government determining so to do. Our national honour, and the safety of our Indian dominions, seemed to render this latter course of paramount necessity." *

"As regards my own line of conduct," said General Sale, "in this difficult crisis, I am of opinion, in the absence of all instructions from India, that I am at liberty to choose between the alternatives of being bound or not by the convention, which was forced from our Envoy and military commander with the knives at their throats, according as I see either one course or the other to be most conducive to British interests. It does not absolutely impose any obligation on my force, which is no party to it, and under the consideration of its having been extorted by force, unless it should be ratified by the Governor-General in Council. If, therefore, I see a prospect of being re-inforced from Peshawur within the period for which my provisions and ammunition will last, I propose to hold this place on the part of the government, until I receive its orders to the contrary. If, however, any untoward incidents should preclude the prospect of Brigadier Wild's crossing the

* *Captain Macgregor's Report: MS. Records.*

Khybur, I should esteem it wiser and better to retire upon Peshawur, with the *débris* of the force of Caubul, on its reaching me, than to remain here; but in no event would I retire unsupported by other troops to Peshawur, unless absolutely compelled to do so by the failure of food and ammunition. I feel assured that the rebels at Caubul dare not proceed to extremities with the force there, so long as they know me to be strong here; and that I should, therefore, be compromising them by evacuating this place, until they have been permitted to retire upon it," *

A season of painful anxiety and suspense followed the receipt of the letter from Pottinger and Elphinstone. But it was not without its alleviations. Money had become scarce at Jellalabad. The cupidity of the Afghans had seldom been proof against English money; and now to lack the means of appealing to it was to lose one of our principal means of defence. It was, therefore, with no common delight that the garrison now welcomed the arrival of a sum of money which Mackeson, ever strenuous in his activity, had sent on from Peshawur, through the agency of Tora-baz Khan, the loyal chief of Lalpoora. The defences of the place, too, were rising under Broadfoot's hands, and "by the middle of January, the commencement of the rainy season, a parapet, nowhere less than six feet high, with a banquette as wide as the nature of the rampart allowed, was completed entirely round the place. The gates were repaired and strengthened by buttresses. Two of them were re-trenched, and a ditch carried round the north-west angle, whilst some of the most dangerous ravines were laid open to our force, and roads were opened into the low ground on the north side." † There

* *General Sale to Sir J. Nicholls, Jellalabad, January* 11, 1842: *MS. Records.*

† *Captain Broadfoot's Report.*

was little, indeed, at this time, except a scarcity of ammunition, to render the garrison apprehensive on their own account; but every day made them more and more anxious concerning the fate of their countrymen, who by this time had left Caubul on their perilous retreat through the snowy passes. A letter from Captain Lawrence, dated on the 4th instant,* announced that the force was to march in a day or two, with every expectation of being attacked upon the road. Nothing could Sale's brigade do in this emergency, but patiently abide the result.

At last, on the 13th of January, when the garrison were

* The letter ran thus :—

Caubul, January 4th, 1842.

My dear Macgregor,

Pottinger being busy, I write to tell you of the Envoy being murdered, and Trevor, on the 23rd. We have been obliged to conclude the treaty, and it is settled we march to-morrow. Whether we are attacked on the road depends upon their good faith. I believe we do not run very much risk as far as Jugdulluck, except from the weather, which is very severe here; and we are obliged to march very lightly, and may expect to lose many men. Orders have been sent to you to evacuate Jellalabad before our arrival: if, however, the treaty is broken by our being attacked, you will consider the orders cancelled, and you will use every exertion to aid us. We have received your letter of the 24th, but our word cannot be broken. Pottinger wishes you, if possible, to send intelligence of these matters to government and Rawlinson, that the latter may be aware of the state of affairs, and not do anything hurriedly. If you understand faith has been kept and are obliged to leave Jellalabad, you had better not pass the Khybur till we come, as it is feared our troops will be so disorganised as to require your aid through that pass. If you could take supplies for us to the mouth of the Khybur, it would be very desirable. We are all well. Lady M(acnaghten) ditto, though still much afflicted. Keep your scouts on the road, and give us as much intelligence as you can. You must chiefly depend on yourself for news of us, as all our Afghans have deserted us. We have no money in our treasury; so tell Mackeson to have some ready for us, if possible.

Yours, &c., &c.,

G. St. P. Lawrence.

busy on the works, toiling with axe and shovel, with their arms piled and their accoutrements laid out close at hand, a sentry, on the ramparts, looking out towards the Caubul road, saw a solitary, white-faced horseman struggling on towards the fort. The word was passed; the tidings spread. Presently the ramparts were lined with officers, looking out, with throbbing hearts, through unsteady telescopes, or with straining eyes tracing the road. Slowly and painfully, as though horse and rider both were in an extremity of mortal weakness, the solitary mounted man came reeling, tottering on. They saw that he was an Englishman. On a wretched, weary pony, clinging, as one sick or wounded, to its neck, he sate or rather leant forward; and there were those who, as they watched his progress, thought that he could never reach, unaided, the walls of Jellalabad.

A shudder ran through the garrison. That solitary horseman looked like the messenger of death. Few doubted that he was the bearer of intelligence that would fill their souls with horror and dismay. Their worst forebodings seemed confirmed. There was the one man who was to tell the story of the massacre of a great army.* A party of cavalry were sent out to succour him. They brought him in wounded, exhausted, half-dead. The messenger was Dr. Brydon, and he now reported his belief that he was the sole survivor of an army of some sixteen thousand men.

* It is said that Colonel Dennie predicted that not a soul would escape except one man, and that he would come to tell that the rest were destroyed. "The voice of Dennie," says Mr. Gleig, "sounded like the response of an oracle, when he exclaimed, 'Did I not say so—here comes the messenger.'"—[*Sale's Brigade in Afghanistan.*]

CHAPTER IV.

[January, 1842.]

The Retreat from Caubul—Departure of the Army—Attack on the Rear-Guard—The First Day's March—Encampment at Begramee—The Passage of the Koord-Caubul Pass—Tezeen—Jugdulluck—Sufferings of the Force—Negotiations with Akbar Khan—Massacre at Gundamuck—Escape of Dr. Brydon.

THE story told by Dr. Brydon was one of which history has few parallels. A British army, consisting of more than four thousand fighting men and twelve thousand camp-followers, had, as he confusedly related, disappeared in a few days. Some had perished in the snow; others had been destroyed by the knives and the jezails of the enemy; and a few had been carried into captivity, perhaps to perish even more miserably than their unhappy comrades who had died in the deep passes of Koord-Caubul, Tezeen, and Jugdulluck.

In the struggle between life and death which then threatened to stifle the evidence of poor Brydon, he told but imperfectly what he knew; and but imperfectly did he know the whole dire history of that calamitous retreat. It was long before the garrison of Jellalabad had more than a dim perception of the events which ended in the annihilation of the Caubul force. No one man could speak of more than certain scenes of the great tragedy; what had happened before, behind, around him, he could only conjecture. But there were other survivors than the solitary man who was brought, wounded and feeble,

into Jellalabad on that January morning; and enough is now on record to enable the historian to group into one intelligible whole all the crowded circumstances of that lamentable retreat.

On the 6th of January, 1842, the army commanded by General Elphinstone, which, for sixty-five days, had been enduring such humiliation as never before had been borne by a British force, prepared to consummate the work of self-abasement by abandoning its position, and leaving the trophies of war in the hands of an insolent enemy. A breach had been cut, on the preceding day, by the Engineer Sturt, through the low ramparts of the cantonments, the earth of which bridged over the ditch; and now through this opening, and through the rear gate, the baggage filed out into the open plain, and the troops prepared to follow it. It was a clear, bright, frosty morning. The cold was intense. The snow was lying deep on the ground. Shelton had recommended that the baggage should be loaded by moon-rise; but it was not before eight o'clock that it was ready to move. About half-past nine the advanced-guard* moved out of the cantonments. The English ladies and the children were with it; for it was supposed to be the place of safety, if safety could be found amidst the certain horrors of this perilous retreat.

It had been agreed that the chiefs should furnish a strong Afghan escort to protect our retiring troops from the furious zeal of the Ghazees, and the uncontrollable

* "The advanced-guard consisted of the 44th Queen's, 4th Irregular Horse, and Skinner's Horse, two horse-artillery six-pounder guns, sappers and miners' mountain-train, and the late Envoy's escort. The main body included the 5th and 37th Native Infantry, the latter in charge of the treasure; Anderson's Horse, the Shah's 6th Regiment, two horse-artillery six-pounder guns. The rear-guard was composed of the 54th Native Infantry, 5th Cavalry, and two six-pounder horse-artillery guns. The force consisted of about 4500 fighting men, and 12,000 followers."—[*Lady Sale's Journal.*]

cupidity of those Afghan bandits who had all along looked upon the revolution only as an opportunity for much plunder. But the army commenced its march without an escort; and the Newab Zemaun Khan, whose good faith and true nobility of character are beyond suspicion, despatched a letter to Pottinger, warning him of the danger of leaving the cantonments without any such provision for their safety.* But it was too late now to stand still. The Mission premises had already fallen into the hands of the enemy; and could not be regained without an engagement, which at such a time it was thought imprudent to risk. Pottinger instructed Conolly, who remained as one of our hostages with Zemaun Khan, to explain all this to the Newab. The good old man admitted the cogency of Pottinger's arguments, and promised to do his best to protect the retreating force. He fulfilled his promise to the utmost of his ability; but he lacked the power to restrain the people from perpetrating the outrages of which long impunity had habituated them to the commission, and made them regard themselves as the privileged instruments of chartered violence and rapine.

The good intentions of the Newab are not to be denied;

* "About eleven o'clock, when about half of the column had moved off, I received a letter from Newab Zemaun Khan, remonstrating against our march. But as the enemy had been enabled to seize the enclosures of the late Envoy's house and offices, owing to the early withdrawal of our guards, we could not consent without commencing an action for the recovery of part of our works. I represented this to the Newab, and begged Mr. Conolly to explain our situation. In consequence, about one P.M., I received another letter from the Newab, agreeing to our movement, and promising that he would protect us as far as he could; and it is my duty to state that he did so to the utmost of his power; but the quantity of baggage delayed the march of the rear-guard, which was obliged to retreat with severe loss, abandoning two guns and much baggage, notwithstanding it did not reach the bivouac at Begramee till two the next morning."—[*Major Pottinger's Budeeabad Report: MS. Records.*]

but the true policy of the British, on that January morning, was to wait for nothing, however advantageous in itself, but to push on with the utmost possible despatch. But everything seemed to favour delay. The passage of the Caubul river was to be accomplished by means of a temporary bridge constructed of gun-waggons, though the river was fordable at many places, and might have been ridden or waded through without detriment to those who had been struggling through the deep snow. On this service, Sturt, active in spite of his wounds, was employed from an early hour; but it seems that the despatch of the gun-waggons was delayed, for some unexplained reason, and it was not until the hour of noon that the bridge was ready for the passage of the troops. Shelton had endeavoured to expedite the movement;* but had met with his usual success. He went to the General's quarters—found him at breakfast; and returned with nothing but a rebuke.

Had the whole of Elphinstone's army crossed the Caubul river before noon, and pushed on with all possible despatch to Koord-Cabul, it might have been saved. But the delays which arose on that dreadful morning, sealed the fate of the unhappy force. It is hard, indeed, to say when the force would have moved out of the cantonments, if another effort had not been made to rouse the General

* Brigadier Shelton says: "I knew nothing of the arrangements for the retreat till they were published the evening before. The order was for the baggage to assemble at eight A.M. At that hour I went to Elphinstone's quarters, to beg he would let the carriages of the gun-waggons go out that were to form a foot-bridge for the infantry over the Caubul river, about 300 yards from cantonments, and got offended for my trouble. He was just sitting down to breakfast. They did not go out till between nine and ten, and having to be dragged through a canal caused further delay, so that the bridge was not completed for the advanced-guard to pass till past twelve."—[*Statement of Brigadier Shelton: MS.*]

to issue the necessary order. Colin Mackenzie, estimating aright the fatal consequences of his chief's hesitation, hastened to Elphinstone's quarters, and found him on horseback before the door of his house, with characteristic irresolution wondering what he ought to do. Eagerly did Mackenzie point out that the stream of people, whose egress from the cantonments was so much desired, had been dammed up, and was now in a state of terrible stagnation —eagerly did he call the attention of the General to the crowds of Ghilzyes who had already begun to swarm into the extensive enclosures of the British Mission-house— eagerly did he beseech the hesitating chief either to issue orders for the advance of the troops, or to recal them and expel the intruding Affghans. And he did not implore in vain. A reluctant assent to the onward movement of the troops was wrung from the General; and Mackenzie galloped back to communicate to Shelton the orders he had received. But much mischief was already done. The day was well-nigh lost. It was a day of suffering and confusion, presaging worse suffering and confusion to come. The advanced-guard under Brigadier Anquetil moved out with some order and steadiness; but in a little while the rush of camp-followers destroyed all semblance of military array. They mixed themselves up with the soldiers—a vast overwhelming assemblage of ten or twelve thousand men. Not a mile of the distance had been accomplished before it was seen how heavily this curse of camp-followers sat upon the doomed army. It was vain to attempt to manage this mighty mass of lawless and suffering humanity. On they went, struggling through the snow—making scant progress in their confusion and bewilderment—scarcely knowing whether they were escaping, or whether they were rushing on to death.

The main body under Brigadier Shelton, with its immense strings of baggage-laden cattle, was moving out of

the cantonments during the greater part of the day. The rear-guard manned the cantonment-walls, and looked down upon a scene of uproar and confusion beyond the imagination to conceive. The enemy, as the day advanced, began to be busy at their work of plunder. Dashing in among the baggage, they cut down the helpless camp-followers, and carried off whatever they could seize. The snow was soon plashed with blood. From the opening in the ramparts to the bridge across the river streamed one great tide of soldiers and camp-followers, camels and ponies; and at the bridge there was an enormous mass of struggling life, from which arose shouts, and yells, and oaths—an indescribable uproar of discordant sounds; the bellowings of the camels, the curses of the camel-drivers, the lamentations of the Hindostanees, the shrieks of women, and the cries of children; and the savage yells of the Ghazees rising in barbarous triumph above them all.

So tedious was the exode of the force, such were the embarrassments that beset its progress, that when the shadows of evening began to descend upon this melancholy scene, the rear-guard was still on the walls. At six o'clock they marched out of the cantonments; and, moved by one common thirst of plunder, the Afghans poured themselves upon the abandoned homes of the English, and, when they could not gratify their cupidity, began to gratify their revenge. The Feringhees had left little behind them. They had destroyed almost everything which they could not carry away, except the guns, which the General had deemed it expedient to leave in good condition for the use of his "new allies."* But at

* Eyre says that "the General had often been urged to destroy these guns rather than suffer them to fall into the enemy's hands; but he considered that it would be a breach of the treaty to do so." We cannot restrain a smile at Elphinstone's simplicity; but at the same time, the circumstance noted affords rather a pleasant indication of the

all events there were buildings standing there—buildings erected by the English for their own purposes—insolent monuments of the Feringhee invasion. The work of the incendiary commenced. The Mission-house, the General's quarters, and other public buildings were soon in a blaze; and the British army, now scattered over the whole line of country between Caubul and Begramee, some already at the halting-ground and others only now starting on their dreary march, looked out through the frosty night at the great conflagration, which lit up the super-incumbent sky like a stormy sunset, and for miles around reddened the great coverlid of snow.

Not until two hours after midnight did the rear-guard reach its encamping ground, on the right bank of the river, near Begramee. They had been under arms since eight o'clock in the morning. They had been savagely attacked on leaving the cantonments, and had left fifty of their numbers dead or dying in the snow, and two of their guns in the hands of the enemy.* They had now only accomplished five or six miles of their fearful journey; but they had seen enough to fill them with horrible forebodings of the fate that was in store for them. The road was strewn with dying wretches, smitten by the unendurable cold. The miserable people of Hindostan—the weaker women and young children—had already begun to lay themselves down to die in the dreadful snow. Even the Sepoys were sinking down on the line of march, and quietly awaiting death.

General's honesty of purpose and singleness of character. As an honourable English gentleman, having covenanted to give up his guns, he considered himself bound to deliver them over in the state in which they were at the time the covenant was made. The enemy do not seem to have appreciated Elphinstone's generosity, for they burned the carriages of the guns, as soon as our troops evacuated the cantonments.

* Lieut. Hardyman, of the 5th Cavalry, was shot through the heart.

The night was one of suffering and horror. The snow lay deep on the ground. There was no order—no method in anything that was done. The different regiments encamped anywhere. Soldiers and camp-followers were huddled together in one inextricable mass of suffering humanity. Horses, camels, and baggage-ponies were mixed up confusedly with them. Nothing had been done to render more endurable the rigour of the northern winter.* The weary wretches lay down to sleep—some never rose again; others awoke to find themselves crippled for life by the biting frost.

The morning dawned; and without any orders, without an attempt to restrain them, the camp-followers and baggage struggled on ahead, and many of the Sepoys went on with them. Discipline was fast disappearing. The regiments were dwindling down to the merest skeletons. It was no longer a retreating army; it was a rabble in chaotic flight. The enemy were pressing on our rear; seizing our baggage; capturing our guns;† cutting up all in their way. Our soldiers, weary, feeble, and frost-bitten, could make no stand against the fierce charges of the Afghan horsemen. It seemed that the

* A writer in the *Calcutta Review* says: "Major Pottinger told us that when the retreat was decided on, and no attention was paid to his, Lawrence's, and Conolly's advice to concentrate in the Balla Hissar, he urged the officers to have all the old horse-clothing, &c., cut into strips, and rolled round the soldiers' feet and ankles after the Afghan fashion, as a better protection against snow than the mere hard leather shoes. This he repeatedly urged, but in vain, and within a few hours the frost did its work. Major Pottinger said that there was not an Afghan around them who had not his legs swathed in rags as soon as the snow began to fall."

† The mountain-train guns here fell into the enemy's hands, in spite of the gallantry of Lieutenant Green, who was in charge, and the artillerymen under his command. Green succeeded in spiking the guns, but being poorly supported by the infantry, he could not recapture them. Two horse-artillery guns were abandoned soon afterwards.

whole rear-guard would speedily be cut off. All thoughts of effectual resistance were at an end. There was nothing now to be hoped for, but from the forbearance of the Afghan chiefs.

The Newab Zemaun Khan had ever been true to us: ever in the midst of the wild excitement of the Caubul outbreak, and in the flush of national triumph, he had been serene, generous, and forbearing; had borne himself as a worthy enemy; had been betrayed into no excesses; but had endeavoured to vindicate the rights of the Afghans, without inflicting upon the Feringhees the misery and humiliation which others contemplated with irrepressible delight. He had exerted himself on the preceding day, to control the fierce passions of his countrymen; and now he wrote to Major Pottinger, exhorting him to arrest the progress of the retreating army, and promising to send supplies of food and firewood, and to disperse the fanatic bands which were hovering so destructively on our flanks. Pottinger went to the General; and the General consented to the halt.* Shelton, on the other hand, was eager for an advance. He believed that their only chance of safety lay in a rapid forward movement, shaking off the baggage and camp-followers as they went. In this conviction, he hurried forward to Elphinstone, and implored him to proceed.†

* "About mid-day I received a letter from Newab Zemaun Khan and Naib Ameen-collah, requesting us to halt till they dispersed the fanatics, and promising us supplies of provisions and firewood if we did so. I communicated this to General Elphinstone, with the information that the defile in front was strongly occupied. The General having taken this into consideration, the utter confusion which prevailed, the exhausted state of the Sepoys, who had been under arms in deep snow from daylight of the 6th (with scarcely any rest, and neither food nor water at the bivouac), joined with the pressure on the rear-guard, he determined to halt till night and then pursue his march."—[*Major Pottinger's Budeeabad Report: MS. Records.*]

† "I had just formed up a corps near Boot-Khak to resist a

But the General was not to be moved; and the doomed army halted at Boot-Khak.

Here Akbar Khan appeared upon the scene. With a body of some 600 horsemen he rode up, and Pottinger saw him in the distance. Believing that he was a Sirdar of note, the political chief despatched Captain Skinner, with a flag of truce, to communicate with him. Skinner brought back a friendly message. The Sirdar, he said, had reproached the British authorities for their hasty movement on the preceding morning; but added that he had come out to protect them from the attacks of the Ghazees. His instructions were to demand other hostages, as security for the evacuation of Jellalabad; and to arrest the progress of the force, supplying it in the interval with everything it required, until such time as intelligence of the retirement of Sale's force should be received. "It was too late to send a reply," wrote Pottinger, in his report of these proceedings, "and nothing was determined—but some persons persuaded the General to abandon his intention of marching by night." And so the doomed force, whilst the enemy were mustering to block up the passes in advance, spent another night of inactivity and suffering in the cruel snow.

It was at the entrance of the Koord-Caubul Pass that the force, now on the evening of the 7th of January having in two days accomplished a distance of only ten miles,* halted on some high ground. The confusion

threatened attack, and was moving on again, when I heard the General had ordered a halt. I immediately hurried forward and entreated him to continue the march, having only come three miles, and assured him a halt on the snow, without tents or food, would destroy the troops; but he was immoveable, talked of the Sirdars' promises, and sending a letter to Caubul to know why they had not sent us a safeguard. Here was another day entirely lost, and the enemy collecting in numbers."—[*Statement of Brigadier Shelton: MS. Records.*]

* *Eyre's Narrative.*

far exceeded that of the preceding night. The great *congeries* of men, women, and children, horses, ponies, and camels, there wallowing in the snow, no words can adequately describe. Many lay down only to find a winding-sheet in the snow. There was no shelter—no firewood—no food. The Sepoys burnt their caps and accoutrements to obtain a little temporary warmth. One officer* narrates how he and eleven others "crowded round the hot ashes of a pistol-case, and with some bottles of wine still remaining, tried to keep off the effect of the cold. They then all huddled together and lay down on the ground to sleep."

The sun rose upon many stiffened corpses; and a scene of still greater confusion than had marked the dawn of the preceding morning now heralded the march of the force. Doubt and uncertainty regarding the intentions of their chiefs brooded over the officers of the force; but few of the soldiers now remembered their chiefs, and the camp-followers were wholly regardless of their wishes.

One paramount desire to escape death held possession of that wretched multitude; and a crowd of soldiers and camp-followers, at an early hour, began to push on confusedly to the front. Whilst some efforts were being made to restrain them, Akbar Khan was in communication with the officers of the British Mission. Skinner again went out to meet the Sirdar. It was proposed that the army should either halt on their present ground at Boot-Khak, or make their way to Tezeen, there to await intelligence of the evacuation of Jellalabad. Four hostages were demanded as security for Sale's retreat; and Brigadier Shelton and Captain Lawrence were named as two of them. But Shelton had always resolutely refused to give himself up to the enemy, and Elphinstone was unwilling to order him.

* Lieutenant Melville.

Pottinger, therefore, volunteered to take his place,* and Brigadier Anquetil consented, if a general officer were peremptorily demanded, to accompany the political chief.

Pottinger rode to the rear, where Akbar Khan sent a party of horsemen to conduct him to his presence. Welcoming the young English officer with a respectful kindliness of manner, the Sirdar declared himself willing to receive three hostages—Major Pottinger, Captain Lawrence, and any other officer whom the former might select. Pottinger named Colin Mackenzie, than whom there was not in all the army a braver or a better soldier,† and those three officers placed themselves in the hands of Akbar Khan.

The force was now again in motion. It was agreed that they should push on to Tezeen, there to await certain tidings of the evacuation of Jellalabad. Between Boot-Khak and Tezeen lies the stupendous pass of Koord-Caubul. For a distance of five miles it runs between precipitous mountain-ranges, so narrow and so shut in on either side that the wintry sun rarely penetrates its gloomy recesses.‡ Into the jaws of this terrible defile the

* "I volunteered to go in his place, thinking that such a mark of confidence would induce the chief not only to spare that officer (Shelton), but also Captain Lawrence (whose presence was requisite in charge of the Mission, as my wound rendered me incapable of exertion), and probably some other officers whose services in the disorganised state of the force could scarcely be dispensed with."—[*Major Pottinger's Report: MS. Records.*]

† The Jezailchees whom he commanded had been by this time nearly annihilated, and "his services with them, therefore," said Pottinger, "could be of little further use."

‡ "Down the centre," says Eyre, "dashed a mountain torrent, whose impetuous course the frost in vain attempted to arrest, though it succeeded in lining the edges with thick layers of ice, over which the snow lay consolidated in slippery masses, affording no very easy footing for our jaded animals. This stream we had to cross and recross eight-and-twenty times."

disorganised force now struggled in fearful confusion. In vain did Akbar Khan issue his orders; in vain did his principal adherents exert themselves to control the hordes of fanatic Ghilzyes, who poured upon our struggling rabble a deadly fire from their jezails. Nothing could restrain the fierce impetuosity of our cruel assailants. Pent in between the incumbent walls of the narrow pass, now splashing through the mountain torrent, now floundering through the snow which filled the hollows, or was banked up beside the stream, the wretched fugitives fell an easy prey to the Ghilzye marksmen, who shot them down from the hill-sides. It was not a time to think of saving anything but human life. Baggage, ammunition, public and private property, were abandoned;* and the Sepoys suffered their very firelocks to be taken out of their hands.

The massacre was fearful in this Koord-Caubul Pass. Three thousand men are said to have fallen under the fire of the enemy, or to have dropped down paralysed and exhausted, to be slaughtered by the Afghan knives. And amidst these fearful scenes of carnage, through a shower of matchlock balls, rode English ladies on horseback, or in camel panniers, sometimes vainly endeavouring to keep their children beneath their eyes, and losing them in the confusion and bewilderment of the desolating march.

Many European officers perished in the Koord-Caubul Pass. Among them was Captain Paton, the assistant adjutant-general—a good and gallant officer who had lost an arm in action at Caubul. Here, too, fell, mortally stricken, Lieutenant Sturt of the engineers, a very fine young officer, who, though severely wounded at the com-

* "On leaving Caubul," says Captain Johnson, "each Sepoy had 40 rounds of ammunition in pouch, and about 60 camel loads per regiment, with 100 spare loads. We have not at present (January 8), for the whole force, three camel loads in box, and numbers of the Sepoys have not a single cartridge in pouch."

mencement of the outbreak, stabbed in the face at the door of Shah Soojah's presence-chamber, had exerted himself with overflowing zeal and unfailing activity, whenever his services, as the only engineer at Caubul, were required; and whose voice, when others counselled unworthy concessions, had ever been lifted up in favour of the noblest and the manliest course. He lingered some little time, in agony of body, but unbroken bravery of spirit, and died on the 9th of January, attended by his wife and mother-in-law; the daughter and wife of Sir Robert Sale.

That night the force again halted in the snow, now deepened by a heavy fall, which, as the army neared the high table-land of Koord-Caubul, had increased the bitterness of the march.* The night was, like its predecessors, one of intense suffering, spent by the perishing troops without shelter, without firewood, and without food. At early morn there was another rush of camp-followers and undisciplined Sepoys to the front; but the march of the troops, which had been ordered at ten o'clock, was countermanded by the General. Akbar Khan was then offering to supply the force with provisions, and to do his best for its future protection. At his suggestion a halt was ordered by Elphinstone; and the perishing troops sate down in the snow, which another march would have cleared, for a day of painful uncertainty. The whole force was against the delay. Shelton went to the General to remonstrate against it. In vain he urged that such a measure would cause the total destruction of the column.

* Eyre says: "On the force reaching Koord-Caubul, snow began to fall and continued till morning."—[*Military Operations*, page 210.] General Elphinstone says: "Ere we reached the bivouac snow fell and continued during the night." Brigadier Shelton says, on the other hand, "On approaching Koord-Caubul it begun to snow, but fortunately cleared up about dusk." Such discrepancies as these may well excuse the historian, if he be guilty of any slight errors of detail.

The General was not to be moved from his purpose. The day was one of idleness and desertion. The Native troops, led by Shah Soojah's cavalry, began to bethink themselves of escaping from the horrors of the retreat by going over to the enemy. The General had paraded the ruins of the different regiments to repel an anticipated attack; and now Captain Grant, the adjutant-general, accompanied by the Tezeen chief, Khoda Bux Khan, rode to the head of these skeleton corps, now numbering scarcely more than a hundred men in each, and explained to them that Akbar Khan had declared his intention to kill all, who deserted to him, on the spot. But the contagion was then fast spreading; and nothing could check the progress of the disease. The Shah's 2nd Cavalry had gone over nearly to a man.

In the mean while Major Pottinger, who had passed the night in a neigbouring castle, was in consultation with Akbar Khan; and Captain Skinner was acting as the vehicle of communication between them and the head-quarters of the army. A new, and, at the first sound, startling proposition was now made by the Sirdar. He proposed that all the English ladies with the force should be placed under his charge, that he might convey them safely to Peshawur. Remembering that the families of the Sirdar himself were prisoners in the hands of the British, and believing that he was sincere in his desire to save the ladies and children from the destruction that awaited them on the line of march, Pottinger sanctioned the proposal; and Skinner was despatched to the head-quarters of the force to obtain the General's consent. "Desirous to remove the ladies and children, after the horrors they had already witnessed, from the further dangers of our camp, and hoping that, as from the very commencement of the negotiations the Sirdar had shown the greatest anxiety to have the married people as hos-

tages, this mark of trust might elicit a corresponding feeling in him,"* Elphinstone complied with the request. A party of Afghan horse were in readiness to conduct them to the presence of the Sirdar; and so Lady Macnaghten, Lady Sale, and the other widows and wives of the British officers, became the "guests" of the son of Dost Mahomed Khan.

They did not go alone. The married men went with them. The propriety of this step has been questioned. It has been even said that they were not demanded at all by Akbar Khan, but that they threw themselves spontaneously upon the mercy of the chief. It is right, therefore, that so grave a question should not be slurred over. There were three unprejudiced witnesses, whose statements, on such a point, would be worthy of acceptation, as the statements of honourable and unprejudiced men, familiar with all the circumstances of the case. Major Pottinger, Captain Skinner, and General Elphinstone knew all those circumstances, and had no reason to misrepresent them. Major Pottinger says that, "on Sirdar Mahomed Akbar Khan offering to take charge of the ladies and protect them to Peshawur, I considered it advisable to recommend that they should come over, as the Sirdar's family being in our hands was a sufficient guarantee for their good treatment, and it was evident that our own people were too much diminished to protect them. Captain Skinner accordingly went over and mentioned the offer to General Elphinstone, who approved of it, and sent over the ladies, children, and married officers." Captain Skinner has left upon record no narrative of these proceedings. But General Elphinstone has distinctly stated that Captain Skinner was sent to him with a proposal "that the married people

* *Statement of General Elphinstone.*

and their families should be made over to him, promising honourable treatment to the ladies." Whatever may have been the proposition, as it originally emanated from the Sirdar, there is no room to doubt that General Elphinstone shaped it into a recommendation that the husbands should accompany their wives, and that the former went over to Akbar Khan with the entire sanction of their military chief.*

That the safety of the women and children was secured by their removal from General Elphinstone's disorganised camp to the custody of Akbar Khan, is now a fact which stands out distinctly in the broad light of historical truth. But writing now after the event, it becomes one to consider rather the wisdom of the experiment than the success of the result. I believe that Pottinger and Elphinstone judged wisely. There was a choice of evils, and it appears to me that they chose the least. The women and the children could not long have survived the horrors of that perilous march. They had hitherto escaped, almost by a miracle, the assaults of the cruel climate and the inexorable foe. They were insufficiently clad. They had no servants to attend upon them. They had scarcely tasted food since they left Caubul. They had no shelter during the frosty night-season. Some had just become, or were about soon to become, mothers; and yet they had been compelled to ride in jolting camel-panniers, or on the backs of stumbling baggage-ponies. It was plain that

* The party consisted of Lady Macnaghten, Lady Sale, Mrs. Sturt and one child; Mrs. Trevor and seven children; Captain Boyd, wife and child; Captain Anderson, wife and child; Lieutenant Waller, wife and child; Lieutenant Eyre, wife and child; Mr. Ryley, wife and child; Mrs. Mainwaring and child; Serjeant Wade and family. Captain Troup and Lieutenant Mein, being wounded and unserviceable, went with them. Eyre says that it was the intention of the General that all the wounded officers should go; but that there was not time to make known his intentions.

Akbar Khan had no power to restrain the tribes who were butchering our helpless people. The army was fast melting away. It was doubtful whether a man would reach Jellalabad in safety. To have left the women and children to pursue their march would have been to have left them to inevitable destruction. Akbar Khan might be a man of violent and ferocious temper, and no very scrupulous good faith; but because he had slain the Envoy in a gust of passion, it did not necessarily follow that he would betray the widow of his victim and the other English ladies who were now to be entrusted to his safe keeping. Moreover, if no sentiments of honour and no feelings of compassion were within him, he might still be swayed by motives of self-interest; and it was not forgotten that his father, his brothers, and the ladies of his family were prisoners in the hands of the British Government, in the provinces of Hindostan.

The married officers and their families having gone over to the Sirdar, the remnant of the doomed force on the following morning (the 10th of January) resumed its march towards Jellalabad. There was the same miserable confusion as on the preceding morning. Soldiers and camp-followers rushed promiscuously to the front. The Native regiments were fast melting into nothing. Throwing down their arms and crowding in among the mass of camp-followers, the Sepoys were rapidly swelling the disorganised rabble in front. Their hands were frost-bitten; they could not pull a trigger; they were paralysed, panic-struck; they rushed forward in aimless desperation, scarcely knowing what they did or where they went; whilst the Afghans, watching the cruel opportunity, came down, with their long knives, amidst their unresisting victims, and slaughtered them like sheep. "A narrow gorge between the precipitous spurs of two hills" was the appointed shambles. There the dead and the dying soon choked up the defile.

There was not now a single Sepoy left. Every particle of baggage was gone. About fifty horse-artillerymen, with one howitzer gun; some 250* men of the 44th; and 150 cavalry troopers, now constituted the entire force. Of the 16,000 men—soldiers and camp-followers—who had left Caubul, not more than a quarter survived.

Still hovering on the flanks of our retreating force, Akbar Khan, attended by a party of horsemen, watched the butchery that was going on below; and when Elphinstone sent Skinner to remonstrate with him, declared that he was powerless to restrain the savage impetuosity of the Ghilzyes, whom even their own immediate chiefs could not control. But he had a proposal to make. Those were not times when any very nice regard for the national honour prompted the rejection of even humiliating terms offered by our Afghan enemies; but when the Sirdar proposed that the remnant of the British army should lay down their arms, and place themselves entirely under his protection, Elphinstone at once refused his consent. The march was therefore resumed. The wreck of the British force made its desperate way down the steep descents of the Haft-Kotul, into a narrow defile, strewn with the ghastly remains of the camp-followers and soldiers, who had pushed on in advance of the column. As they passed down the defile, the enemy opened a destructive fire on their rear. The rear was then commanded by Shelton. With a handful of Europeans he repulsed their attacks, "though obliged to nurse their ammunition by a watchful check on its expenditure." "Nobly and heroically," says Shelton, in his rapid narrative of the march, "these fine fellows stood by me."† The gallantry of these few men was, for a time, the salvation of the whole.

* Eyre says "seventy files." I give the above number on Shelton's authority—they were men of his own corps, and he was with them.

† *MS. Records.* Eyre says: "Brigadier Shelton commanded the

After another attempt at negotiation, resulting only in the same demand for the disarming of the remnant of the force, it was determined, at Shelton's suggestion, that a desperate effort should be made to reach Jugdulluck by a rapid night-march. Enfeebled by starvation, the troops were little able to struggle forward, on their perilous march, over a difficult country, and in the face of an active enemy. But despair had given them strength; and when the order was given, having spiked their last remaining gun, they moved off lightly and quietly in the hope of shaking off, under cover of the night, the curse of camp-followers, which had sate upon them with such destructive tenacity from the first. But no sooner had the soldiers began to move, than the camp-followers started up to accompany them; and throughout that fearful night-march clustered around the few good fighting men and paralysed the movements of the force.

It was a bright, frosty night. The snow was lying only partially on the ground. For some miles they proceeded unmolested. But when, at Seh-Baba, the enemy again opened a fire upon their rear, the camp-followers rushed to the front; and when firing was heard ahead of the column, again fell back on the rear. Thus surging backwards and forwards—the ebb and flow of a great tide of people—these miserable camp-followers, in the wildness of their fear, overwhelmed the handful of soldiers who were still able and willing to show a front to the enemy, blocked up the road, and presented to the eyes of the Afghan marksmen a dark mass of humanity, which could not escape their fire even under cover of the night.

Soon after daybreak the advance reached Kutter-Sung. They were still ten miles from Jugdulluck. Halting only

rear with a few Europeans; and but for his persevering energy and unflinching fortitude in repelling the assailants, it is probable the whole would have been sacrificed."

till the rear-guard had come up, they pushed on with an energy, which at the commencement of the retreat might have saved the force from destruction. But it was now too late. The enemy were crowning the heights; there was no possibility of escape. Shelton, with a few brave men of the rear-guard, faced the overwhelming crowd of Afghans with a determined courage worthy of British soldiers; and fought his way to Jugdulluck. Almost every inch of ground was contested. Gallantly did this little band hold the enemy in check. Keeping the fierce crowd from closing in upon the column, but suffering terribly under the fire of their jezails, they made their way at last to the ground where the advance had halted, behind some ruined walls on a height by the road-side. Their comrades received them with a cheer. The cheer came from a party of officers, who had extended themselves in line on the height to show an imposing front to their assailants.* The enemy seemed to increase in number and in daring. They had followed the rear-guard to Jugdulluck, and they now took possession of the heights commanding the position of their victims.

The hot fire of the enemy's jezails drove the survivors of the Caubul army to seek safety behind the ruined walls, near which they had posted themselves. Withdrawn from the excitement of the actual conflict, these wretched men now began to suffer in all their unendurable extremes the agonies of hunger and thirst. They scooped up the snow in their hands and greedily devoured it. But it only increased their torments. There was a stream of pure

* "As scarcely any Europeans of the advance now remained, and the enemy were increasing, the General called several of the officers (about twenty of us) to form line and show a front. We had scarcely done so, when my friend Captain Grant, who was next to me, received a ball through his cheek, which broke his jaw. I lifted him off his horse, and seated him on the ground."—[*Capt. Johnson's Journal.*]

water near at hand, but they could not approach it without being struck down by the fire of the enemy. Behind the walls they had a brief respite; and they tried to snatch a hasty meal. The ever active Commissariat officer, Johnson, found among the camp-followers three bullocks, which were instantly killed and served out to the famishing European soldiers, who devoured, with savage voracity, the raw and reeking flesh.

The respite was but of brief duration. A party of the enemy's horsemen was observed, and one of the number, having approached our people, said that the chief who commanded them was Akbar Khan. Skinner, who had acted throughout as the negotiator, now went to remonstrate with the Sirdar against the continued attacks of his countrymen. He had scarcely set out, when the firing was resumed. The men had lain down in the snow, to snatch a little brief repose after a long vigil of thirty hours, when the enemy poured in volley after volley upon their resting-place, and compelled them, in wild confusion—soldiers and camp-followers again huddled together—to quit the walled enclosure in which they had bivouacked. Individual acts of heroism were not wanting at this time to give something of dignity even to this melancholy retreat. A handful of the 44th Regiment here made a gallant rush at the enemy and cleared all the ground before them. Bygrave, the paymaster of the Caubul army, was at their head. Thinking that our whole force would follow them, the Afghans fled in dismay. But the little party was soon recalled to the main body, which again retired behind the ruined walls; and again the enemy returned to pour upon them the destructive fire of their terrible jezails.

All night long and throughout the next day the force halted at Jugdulluck. In the mean while Akbar Khan was in communication with the British chiefs. Skinner

had returned with a message from the Sirdar, inviting the General, Brigadier Shelton, and Captain Johnson to a conference. They went, and were received with every possible demonstration of kindness and hospitality. A cloth was spread on the ground. Food was placed before them, and draughts of tea satisfied their thirst. The meal completed, the Afghan chiefs and the English officers sate round a blazing fire and conversed. Captain Johnson was the spokesman on the part of the latter; for he understood the language employed. Through him the wishes of the General were now conveyed to Akbar Khan. The Sirdar promised to send provisions and water to the famishing troops,* but insisted on retaining the General, Shelton, and Johnson as hostages for the evacuation of Jellalabad. Elphinstone earnestly entreated permission to return to his troops—urged that, as commanding officer of the force, his desertion would appear dishonourable in the eyes of his countrymen, and promised, on returning to camp, to send Brigadier Anquetil in his place. But the Sirdar was inexorable; and so General Elphinstone, Brigadier Shelton, and Captain Johnson remained as hostages in the hands of Akbar Khan. That night, under a tent provided for them by the Sirdar, they laid themselves down in their cloaks, and enjoyed such sleep as they only can know who have spent such nights of horror as closed upon the sufferers in this miserable retreat.

Next morning the conference was resumed. The English officers earnestly implored the Sirdar to save the remnant of the unhappy force; and he promised to exert all the authority he possessed to restrain the tribes from

* "Subsequently," says Captain Johnson, "we had the extreme mortification to learn that not one particle of food or water had been tasted by the troops from their arrival to their departure from Jugdulluck."

their unholy work of massacre and plunder. But the petty chiefs of the country between Jugdulluck and Jellalabad came flocking in; and it seemed impossible to control the savage impulses of hatred and vindictiveness which broke out even in the presence of the English officers, and seemed to shut out all hope for the future. They had trampled down every feeling of mercy and compassion. Even avarice had ceased to be a moving principle; offers of money were disregarded, and they loudly declared that they wanted only the blood of the Feringhees. In vain Akbar Khan tried to dissuade them from their horrid purpose—in vain he urged that his father and his family were prisoners in the hands of the British Government; in vain the offer of large sums of money for a safe conduct to Jellalabad was made to these unrelenting chiefs. Johnson, who understood the language well, heard them conversing in Persian; and it was plain that they revelled in the thought of cutting the throats of the Feringhees even more than of growing rich on their plunder. They were not to be conciliated. Akbar Khan made an effort to pacify them, and they said in reply that they had recommended his father to kill Burnes, lest he should return and bring an army with him.

If there was any hope at this time it lay in an appeal to the cupidity of their chiefs, but their hatred seemed to overlay their avarice. Mahomed Shah Khan,* however, had undertaken to work upon their known love of money, and asked whether the British were prepared to pay two lakhs of rupees for safe conduct to Jellalabad. The General had assented to this, and Mahomed Shah Khan had undertaken the office of mediator; but it was long before he could bring about any satisfactory arrangement.

* Mahomed Shah Khan was father-in-law of Akbar Khan.

At length, as the shades of evening were thickening around them, he brought intelligence to the effect that everything had been peaceably settled, and that the remnant of the British army would be allowed to proceed unmolested to Jellalabad.

But scarcely had he announced this consoling intelligence, when the sound of firing was heard to issue from the direction in which the British troops were bivouacked. By the order of the General, Captain Johnson had written to Brigadier Anquetil, upon whom now, as senior officer, the command of the force had devolved, directing him to have the troops in readiness to march at eight o'clock on the following morning. But the letter had not been despatched when the firing was heard, and it became evident that the British troops were again on the move. It was about eight o'clock, on the evening of the 12th, that the few remaining men—now reduced to about a hundred and twenty of the 44th, and twenty-five artillerymen—prepared to resume their perilous march. The curse of camp-followers clung to them still. The teeming rabble again came huddling against the fighting men; and the Afghans, taking advantage of the confusion, stole in, knife in hand, amongst them, destroying all the unarmed men in their way, and glutting themselves with plunder.

They did not, this time, escape. The soldiers turned and bayoneted the plunderers; and fought their way bravely on. But there was a terrible fate awaiting them as they advanced. The Jugdulluck Pass was before them. The road ascends between the steep walls of this dark precipitous defile, and our wretched men struggled onward, exposed to the fire of the enemy, till on nearing the summit they came suddenly upon a barricade, and were thrown back in surprise and dismay. The enemy had blocked up the mouth of the pass. Barriers, made

of bushes and the branches of trees, opposed the progress of the column, and threw the whole into inextricable confusion. The camp-followers crowded upon the soldiers, who, in spite of the overwhelming superiority of the enemy, fought with a desperate valour worthy of a better fate. The Afghans had been lying in wait for the miserable remnant of the British army, and were now busy with their cruel knives and their unerring jezails. The massacre was something terrible to contemplate. Officers, soldiers, and camp-followers were stricken down at the foot of the barricade. A few, strong in the energy of desperation, managed to struggle through it. But from that time all hope was at an end. There had ceased to be a British army.

In this terrible Jugdulluck Pass many brave officers fell with their swords in their hands. Up to this time death had not been very busy among the commissioned ranks of our ill-fated army. The number of officers that survived, when the column left Jugdulluck, was large in proportion to the number of soldiers who remained to follow them. Though they had ever been in the midst of danger, and had been especially marked by the Afghan jezailchees, they had hitherto escaped with an impunity which had not been the lot of the common soldiers. This is to be attributed partly to external and partly to internal advantages. They had enjoyed no better covering and no better food than their comrades; but they had ridden good horses; and though, outwardly, means of keeping off the cruel cold had not been enjoyed by them less scantily than by the European soldiers, they had brought to their aid all the advantages of superior mental resource. They had been more cautious and more provident, and had been greatly upheld by the knowledge of the responsibility which in such a fearful conjuncture devolved upon them. There is a sustaining power, under

severe physical trial, in the sense of moral responsibility; the feeling that others are dependent upon one's exertions has a bracing and invigorating effect; and whatever excites mental activity is favourable to physical endurance. Many, in the course of that terrible retreat from Caubul, had perished under the influence of mental despondency; many had been destroyed by their own incaution. The officers had fallen only under the fire of the enemy. Thousands of the soldiers and camp-followers had been destroyed by the cruel cold.

But here, at this fearful Jugdulluck barrier, death struck at the officers of the wretched force. Twelve of the best and bravest here found their last resting-place.* Here fell Brigadier Anquetil, upon whom, after the departure of Elphinstone and Shelton, had devolved the command of the column. He had been the chief of Shah Soojah's force; was held in esteem as a good officer; but during almost the entire period of the siege had been incapacitated by sickness from taking a prominent part in the military operations which had ended in so much disaster and disgrace. Here, too, fell Major Thain, who had gone out to India as the friend and aid-de-camp of General Elphinstone, and in that capacity had followed his chief to Caubul; but throughout the time of their beleaguerment, and all through the retreat, had been forward in the hour of active danger, and had gallantly served as a regimental officer whenever one was wanted to lead a charge. Here, too, fell Colonel Chambers, who had commanded the cavalry at Caubul, and who now, with other officers of his regiment, perished in the attempt to clear the destroying

* Brigadier Anquetil; Col. Chambers, Captain Blair, Captain Bott, and Lieut. Bazett, (5th Cavalry); Captain Nicholl (Horse Artillery); Major Thain, A.D.C.; Captain Dodgin; Quartermaster Halahan; Surgeon Harcourt (H.M.'s 44th); Lieutenant Steer (37th N.I.); Captain Marshall, Shah's force.

barriers. And here, too, fell Captain Nicholl, of the Horse Artillery, who with his men, all through the dangers of the investment and the horrors of the retreat, had borne themselves as gallantly as the best of English soldiers in any place and at any time. Ever in the midst of danger, now charging on horse and now on foot, were those few resolute artillerymen. With mingled admiration and awe the enemy marked the desperate courage of the "red men," and shrunk from a close conflict with what seemed to be superhuman strength and endurance. There is not much in the events of the outbreak at Caubul and the retreat to Jellalabad to be looked back upon with national pride; but the monumental column, on which is inscribed the names of the brave men of Nicholl's troops, who then fell in action with the enemy, only displays the language of simple, unostentatious truth when it records that on "occasions of unprecedented trial, officers and men upheld, in the most noble manner, the character of the regiment to which they belonged;" and years hence, when it has become a mere tradition that Dum-Dum was once the head-quarters' station of that distinguished corps, the young artilleryman, standing in the shadow of the column, will read how Nicholl's troop, the oldest in the regiment, was annihilated in the fearful passes of Afghanistan, will dwell on the heroic conduct which preceded their fall, and glow with pride at the recollection that those brave men were a portion of the regiment which now bears his name on its rolls.*

At this Jugdulluck barrier it may be said that the Caubul force ceased to be. A few officers and a few men cleared the barricade; and struggled on towards Gunda-

* This was written in 1851, since which time Dum-Dum has ceased to be the head-quarters' station of the Artillery—but the column, which was imperfectly constructed, has been blown down, and I believe that only the base with the inscription remains.

muck. About daybreak they reached that place; and the sun rose upon a party of some twenty officers and forty-five European soldiers. The enemy were mustering around them. "Every hut had poured forth its inhabitants to murder and to plunder."* There were not more than two rounds of ammunition remaining in the pouches of our men. But they had not lost all heart. "Their numbers were as one to a hundred—most of them already wounded," † but they were resolute not to lay down their arms whilst a spark of life remained. A messenger came from the chief of the district with overtures to the senior officer present. Major Griffiths, of the 37th Native Infantry, was then the chief of that little band; but whilst he was on his way to the Sirdar, the enemy mustering around them called upon them to give up their arms. The refusal of the brave men, followed by a violent attempt to disarm them, brought on a hand to hand contest. The infuriated mob overwhelmed the little party of Englishmen, and cut them up almost to a man. Captain Souter, of the 44th Regiment, who had wrapped the regimental colour round his waist, and a few privates were taken prisoners. The rest were all massacred at Gundamuck. ‡

A few, however, had pushed on from Soorkhab, which

* *Captain Johnson's Journal.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ The officers known to have perished at Gundamuck, were Captain Grant, Assistant-Adjutant-General, who had been severely wounded at Jugdulluck; Lieutenant Stewart (Horse Artillery); Captain Hamilton (5th Cavalry); Captain Collins, Lieutenants Hogg, Cumberland, and Swinton, and Assistant-Surgeon Primrose, of H.M.'s 44th; Lieutenant Horsburgh and Dr. Metcalfe, of the 5th N.I.; Captain Reid and Lieutenant Hawtry, of the 37th N.I.; Lieutenants Weaver, Morrison, and Cunningham, of the 54th N.I.; Lieutenant Hobhouse, of H.M.'s 13th; Captain Hay, Lieutenant Green (Artillery); and Lieutenant Macartney, of the Shah's service.

lies between Jugdulluck and Gundamuck, in advance of the column. One by one they fell by the way, until the number was reduced to six. Captains Bellew, Collyer, and Hopkins, Lieutenant Bird, and Drs. Harpur and Brydon, reached Futtehabad alive. They were then only sixteen miles from Jellalabad. A prospect of salvation opened out before them all; but only one was suffered to escape. Some peasants in the vicinity of Futtehabad came out, spoke to the fugitives, and offered them bread to eat. They thought that a little food would strengthen them to toil on to the end of their painful journey; and the agonies of hunger were hard to endure. But again was there death in delay. Whilst our officers tarried for a few minutes to satisfy the cravings of nature, some of the armed inhabitants of the place sallied out and attacked them. Bellew and Bird were cut down. The others rode off; but were pursued and overtaken; and three of the remaining number were slain. Dr. Brydon alone escaped to Jellalabad. Wounded, and worn out by famine and fatigue, he had struggled onward, borne by a jaded pony, till the walls of the fort appeared in sight; and a party came out to succour him.

So perished the last remnant of a force which had left Caubul numbering 4,500 fighting men and 12,000 camp-followers. The frost and the snow had destroyed more than the jezails and the knives of the Afghans. It was not a human enemy alone with which those miserable men had to contend. It was theirs to war against a climate more perilous in its hostility than the inexorable foe. But neither the cruel cold nor the malignant Afghans would have consigned the British army to destruction, if the curse which had so long brooded over the councils of our military chiefs, and turned everything into folly and imbecility, had not followed them on their exode from the Caubul cantonments, and crowned the catalogue of disaster

and disgrace. It is probable that, if greater energy had been exhibited at the commencement of the retreat—if nothing had been thought of but the best means of accomplishing the march through the snow with the utmost possible rapidity—a large portion of the force would have been saved. But the delays which were suffered to arise at the commencement of the retreat sealed the fate of the army. They threw the game into the hands of the enemy. We waited, indeed, whilst the gates were being closed upon us, and then there was no outlet of escape. Whilst our wretched people were halting and perishing in the snow, the enemy were gathering in advance of them and lining the passes, intent on their destruction. The events of that miserable week in January afforded a fitting climax to the series of disasters which had darkened the two preceding months. There is nothing, indeed, more remarkable in the history of the world than the awful completeness—the sublime unity—of this Caubul tragedy.

It would be unprofitable to enter into an inquiry regarding all the minute details of misdirection and mismanagement, making up the great sum of human folly, which was the permitted means of our overthrow. In the pages of a heathen writer over such a story as this would be cast the shadow of a tremendous Nemesis. The Christian historian uses other words, but the same prevailing idea runs, like a great river, through his narrative; and the reader recognises the one great truth, that the wisdom of our statesmen is but foolishness, and the might of our armies is but weakness, when the curse of God is sitting heavily upon an unholy cause. "For the Lord God of recompenses shall surely requite."

APPENDIX.

[Many of the notes and illustrative documents which encumbered the text of the original edition of this work are now, after much consideration, removed to the end of the volume. Their omission would have detracted from the authenticity of the history, which their transfer, whilst it increases the fluency of the narrative, leaves unimpaired. I think, therefore, that the change will be regarded as an improvement.]

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE MACADAMISATION OF THE PUNJAB.

[*Book IV., chapter* 2, *page* 48.]

"The plot is thickening," wrote Macnaghten, on the 10th of April, "and I have no hesitation in asserting my belief that we shall find ourselves in a very awkward predicament, unless we adopt measures for macadamising the road through the Punjab." On the 15th of the same month he wrote; "It may not be the interest of our neighbours to give us offence; but it is their interest to do us injury, and in attempts to effect this, a certain good neighbour has certainly been most active and persevering. We have fresh instances and clear proof of this spirit daily. Nothing would give us a greater name in Central Asia than success in such a cause; but I need not dilate on the ten thousand advantages that would attend a vigorous policy in this direction." —[*MS. Correspondence.*] Avitabile's proceedings at this time were a source of extreme annoyance to Macnaghten.

The General was interfering with the Khyburees. The Koochlee-Khail tribe of Afreedis, from whom he demanded revenue, went to Mackeson for protection, and said: "Formerly the Sikhs used to pay us 13,000 rupees a year to get water at Jumrood; and now, on the strength of their alliance with you, they ask us for revenue."—[*Lieutenant Mackeson: April* 12, 1840. *MS. Correspondence.*] The chief of the tribe said to Mackeson: "Why do you stay at Peshawur? You are powerless there, and you prevent us from injuring the Sikhs in return for the injuries they inflict upon us. Come and tarry with us." Avitabile threatened to carry fire and sword among the Koochlee-Khail people; and Mackeson, to prevent the employment of force, went security for them. Besides this, he laid an embargo on all merchants and travellers, subjects of Shah Soojah, passing through Peshawur, and declared that not one of them should proceed until the Shah had given ample security against the commission of robberies in the pass.—[*Lieutenant Mackeson to Mr. Maddock: April 26. MS. Correspondence.*] These things greatly embarrassed our position, at a time when we especially desired to tranquillise the Khyburees. Macnaghten wrote urgently to government on the subject: "By this day's dawk I am sending to the Supreme Government," he wrote, in a private letter, on the 23rd of April, "a budget containing the proceedings of General Avitabile. These are calculated to do infinite mischief—so much so, indeed, that unless redress is afforded, I do not see how it is possible that a rupture with the Sikh Government can be avoided; it's a necessary consequence of such proceedings; all our ties must be renewed in the pass, and commerce by this route may be extinguished. Can the *Volpe* be acting without instructions? Why should he seek to exasperate us? But our convoy has got safely through, and we are on the best possible terms with the Khyburees, who detest our allies."

THE MISSION TO KOKUND.

[*Book IV., chapter 2, page 70.*]

The grounds upon which Macnaghten proceeded in this matter, as well as the recognised objects of the Mission, may be gathered from the following passages of a letter to the Supreme Government: "Referring, therefore, to the general permission accorded in the Secretary's letter of the 11th of May last, on the point of Captain Conolly's mission to Kokund, I have come to the determination of at once sending off that officer to the Court in question by the route of Khiva, and in company with Yakoob Bai, the Khan Huzzrut's envoy here, who is anxious to return home. Yakoob Bai will be a good escort for Captain Conolly through the whole of the desert country extending from the Hindoo-Koosh to Khiva, and thence, as shown by the memorandum of the envoy's conversation with me on the 13th of June last, his way will be safe and easy on to Kokund, the ruler of which place can be directly advised of his approach. His Lordship in Council has himself been pleased to express his sense of Captain Conolly's qualifications for the duty proposed to be entrusted to him, and I venture to hope that this Mission will give great support to our position in Afghanistan, besides being the means of obtaining other important advantages. I have so repeatedly had the honour of laying before the Right Honourable the Governor-General my opinions as to the affairs of Toorkistan, that I need not repeat them. I will do myself the honour of forwarding on another occasion my specific instructions to Captain Conolly for his journey, which will have for its chief object the establishment of a correct impression, at every place which he visits, of British policy and strength, as it bears upon Asia and on Europe, with reference especially to the late interference in Afghanistan — the strengthening of amicable relations with the chief Oosbeg powers, which have shown a friendly disposition towards us, and endeavouring to persuade them to help themselves, and enable us to help them, by doing present justice to their enemies, and forming

an agreement with each other to prevent or to redress future injury done by any one party among them to Russia, so as to deprive the latter power of pretexts for interference with their independence. Captain Conolly will either at Khiva or Kokund learn the result of the endeavour committed to the two deputies of Shah Soojah, mentioned in my letter of yesterday, to bring the Ameer of Bokhara to reason. If by this influence, or by other means, the Ameer should promptly exhibit a decided disposition to atone for his past, and to be friends with us and the Afghan King, Captain Conolly can return to Afghanistan *viâ* Bokhara, otherwise his course must be regulated by circumstances."—[*Sir W. H. Macnaghten to Government: Caubul, August* 2, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*] I have taken this from a copy in Arthur Conolly's hand-writing.

SOURCES OF DOURANEE DISCONTENT.

[*Book III., chapter* 3, *page* 105.]

"It is curious to observe the manner in which the Douranees have reasoned upon the liberality of his Majesty's Government, and the gradual modifications which we may suppose their feelings to have undergone, from the evidence of alterations in their tone and conduct. During the first year of his Majesty's restored government, they exhibited outwardly but little change from the same passive demeanour which had characterised their submission to the Sirdars under the later periods of the Barukzye administration. No sooner, however, had the new order been issued for the remission of the land-tax, than, with resuscitated hopes, they began to remonstrate, to agitate, and ultimately to take up arms, when other means of intimidation failed them. I bring forward, by way of illustration, the example of the tribes in Zemindawer. They had been subjected, during the preceding year, to some severity of treatment by the financial arrangements of Wullee Mahomed Khan; but they had endured the yoke almost without a murmur. Since the arrival of the Wukeel at Candahar they had been, on the

contrary, entirely free from interference. Not a government agent of any class had appeared in Zemindawer, nor had a khurwar of grain been realised, yet the tribes of that district, on the first demand of revenue, took up arms to withstand, as they said, oppressive exactions; and whilst a party of horse were encamped upon this side of the Helmund, appointed to support the government officer in his collections, they crossed the river, and attacked them without the semblance of an excuse on the score of provocation or actual rapacity. The unpopularity of the agent deputed to realise the revenues, and the apprehension of a repetition of the exactions of the previous year, may have been instrumental in assembling the tribes in arms as a measure of defence; but surely such motives are insufficient to justify or explain a gratuitous attack before the collections of the present year had commenced; or, if the motives which the Zemindawerees assigned for their offensive hostility be admitted, surely some radical change of character must have taken place, to have emboldened to this act of aggressive rebellion tribes who had submitted passively to the most galling tyranny on the part of the Sirdars, and who had even yielded, since the accession of his Majesty, to the harshness of the collections of the preceding year without betraying any open signs of discontent. It appears to me that, had the land-tax on the *Tajul Kulbas* been continued, the tribes in Zemindawer, seeing no indication of a change in the policy of the government, and conscious that the power of coercion was stronger at the present than at any previous time, would never have dreamed of assembling in arms to resist the royal authority; and that we must consequently attribute to the exercise of his Majesty's clemency, and to the impression which had arisen from it, that it was the aim of the government to manage the Douranees through the agency of their hopes rather than of their fears, and that rebellion might thus be attempted with impunity, so sudden and unusual a display of boldness as could induce the tribes to rise in arms and attack a government agent, however, and perhaps deservedly, unpopular."—[*Major Rawlinson's Dourance Report. MS. Records.*]

THE QUESTION OF AN ADVANCE UPON HERAT.

[*Chapter III., page* 115.]

Sir Jasper Nicolls, as Commander-in-Chief, had always consistently opposed the advance to Herat, on the grounds that we had not troops for the purpose, and, as a Member of Council, on the grounds that we had not money. On the 18th of August, 1840, on returning some papers to Lord Auckland, he wrote to the Governor-General: "I am glad that your Lordship has repressed the anxiety to annex Herat again to Caubul in the way hinted at. Were Afghanistan ours, we should, perhaps, be compelled to make Herat our advanced post! it is really the gate of India. The problem is solved in a military sense; politically, it remains with your Lordship and the authorities at home, acting on your views. To show front at Herat, and at some selected point on or near the Oxus, we should be very strong in Afghanistan. The elements of stability are sadly deficient there, and two quicksands interpose between Candahar and Caubul and our own provinces. I mean the Punjab and the Ameers' country. Being out of India, we cannot keep such establishments as will be required there without a large augmentation of our army, and this without any perceptible increase of revenue. I very much doubt that Shah Soojah will ever be able to support himself. With this opinion, and seeing here the relief is given up on account of six regiments only, we may feel some apprehension that our numbers are at this moment too low. Discontent may follow." "I wanted him," adds Sir Jasper Nicolls, in his private journal, "to feel that we cannot go further, or even retain seven regiments in Afghanistan without increase of force. We shall maintain ourselves there with difficulty. Yet all the young diplomatists want to aid Khiva—occupy Balkh—threaten Bokhara—and, lastly seize Herat before its traitor Vizier may give it up to Persia and Russia. We are beset with hollow friends in that quarter." "Lord Auckland said nothing of importance in reply, and did not allude to it next day in Council."

On the 15th of March (on which day intelligence of Todd's departure was received by the supreme Government), Sir Jasper Nicolls wrote, after Council, in his journal: "Lord Auckland had prohibited any advance. This accorded with my often-expressed opinion that we are too much extended already; but when I signed my assent to-day in Council to his letters, I whispered to him, that if Herat was to be occupied by us against the will of the Vizier, the present circumstances were very propitious. We had a large body of troops at hand, and probably their plans were not matured." On the 26th he wrote: "Lord Auckland sent home a long minute regarding Herat, which he means to leave as it is, unless the Persians should show that they were anxious to lay hands upon it. He means to preserve our footing in Afghanistan."

In what manner the home authorities regarded the Herat question may be gathered from another passage in Sir Jasper Nicolls' journal: "*August* 19, 1841.—I wrote a hasty paper to-day, and a short one, against the occupation of Herat, if it can possibly be avoided. It was no sooner written than orders were received to seize it, if the Persians made any preparations to attach any part of Kamran's dominions to their own. I wrote in the way of warning. Lord A. also advised the government not to carry our arms further before this despatch was received. I only fully expressed my opinion that we are not justified in risking the revenues of India for anything external. As this subject may be brought unpleasantly forward, I shall just note that, by the June mail, we received a letter desiring us to take Herat. There was by the same mail a later despatch, not so anxious about it, or more cautious. I thought Lord Auckland's minute alluded to the June letter, and very desirous to damp our ardour in carrying on hostilities, and spending our money so far out of India, I wrote as I did. Two hours after my paper was sent in, I received for perusal the Secret Committee's despatch of July, enclosing Lord Palmerston's directions to check Persia in this object. They will not look for any difficulty to be started by me; but really I am most deeply impressed by a conviction that a continuance of so large a force, and of such expenditure

beyond the Indus, will go far to break us down. I have no desire to embarrass the question, or to take a distorted view of it. We all concurred with Lord Auckland, except Prinsep. He thinks that we must displace Yar Mahomed, and he apprehends nothing from the distance or expenditure, in comparison with what must follow from his keeping Afghanistan in revolt. My argument as to the intolerable drain was taken from his minute of March." Again, on the 31st of August, Sir Jasper wrote: "Weekly we expend large sums upon the Shah and the country—not only in allowances, salaries, supplies, stores, pensions, compensations, and numberless contingencies; but barracks, stables, forts, magazines, and even a long causeway in Cutchee. Yet no return can ever be made. *To crown all—the Winter, Herat!*" —[*MS. Journal of Sir Jasper Nicolls.*]

THE CAUBUL CANTONMENTS.

[*Book IV., chapter 4, pp.* 141—142.]

"Occupied with the reception of Shah-zadah Timour, with the foregoing expeditions and detachments, and with the establishment of the Shah's Court and of his civil administration, Macnaghten for some time neglected to consider how the troops which he kept at Caubul, were to be lodged. The question was one demanding instant decision, as the winter of 1839 was rapidly approaching, and there was no suitable cover for troops. Though pressed upon this subject, as soon as it was decided that a portion of the British army was to remain, it was not until the end of August that any steps were taken in this important matter; and then they consented in sending an engineer officer, Lieutenant Durand, accompanied by Mohun Lal, to examine three small forts, which Burnes had reported as affording a suitable position for the troops. These diminutive forts were west of Caubul several miles; and having neither cover, space, water, nor in fact any other requisite for the convenience of the troops, and being, in a military point of view, ill-placed as a position for the force, were at

once rejected by the engineer, who considered that it was essential to have military possession of the Balla Hissar; and that it was the proper place, under every point of view, both with reference to the present and the future, for lodging the troops. The Shah, upon various pretences, opposed this measure of precaution, and Macnaghten yielded to objections which he felt and acknowledged to be ridiculous. Sale was to be left in command at Caubul; and he had therefore a voice in the selection of the locality for the cantonment of his force. The engineer, however, stated that it was impossible, before the winter set in—that is, in the course of six weeks—to build barracks, hospitals, sheds and stables for a brigade, and its attached cavalry and guns, outside the Balla Hissar—building material having as yet to be made and collected; whereas, inside the Balla Hissar, by taking advantage of what already existed, it was possible to obtain good and sufficient cover. Thus circumstanced, a reluctant consent was extracted from the Shah, and the pioneers of the force were immediately set to work, with the view of rendering the citadel a strong work, with cover for its garrison, stores, and ammunition. The Shah no sooner learned that the work was seriously commenced, than he renewed strenuously his objections, urging that the citadel overlooked his own palace and the city; that its occupation would make him unpopular, as the feelings of the inhabitants would be hurt; and that he had already received strong remonstrances against the measure. Macnaghten, with fatal weakness, yielded; and peremptory orders were issued for the discontinuance of the work. Foiled in his avowed purpose of rendering the citadel a post, which, with a thousand men, a few guns, and proper provisions, might be held against all that Afghanistan could bring before it, the engineer was forced to content himself with keeping such hold of the Balla Hissar as admitted of its citadel being occupied at any moment, by lodging the troops in hastily-prepared accommodation at its base. It seemed, indeed, that the troops, being once in military possession of the Balla Hissar, the evacuation of that stronghold in future was an event as improbable as it would be impolitic, and that the occupation of the citadel and the repair of its

works would in time inevitably follow. Macnaghten could not but coincide with the engineer and those who succeeded him and held similar views; and, as the cost would have been trifling in comparison with the sums thrown away in Afghanistan upon objects to which political importance was attached, the Envoy for some time contemplated following up the project. But the Shah and Kuzzilbash party, as well as the Afghans, were very averse to a measure which, so long as the British troops remained in Afghanistan, would keep Caubul subject to their effectual control; and Macnaghten, being in the false position of having to reconcile the declared intention of the government to withdraw the army from Afghanistan with its present actual military occupation in force, wavered on the adoption of necessary measures of precaution, which might countenance the suspicion of a purpose on the part of the British Government permanently to hold the country; and, ultimately, in an evil hour for himself and his country's arms, not only entirely neglected such salutary precaution, but gave up the barracks constructed in the Balla Hissar to the Shah as accommodation for his Harem, evacuated the fort, and thought no more, until too late, of strengthening himself therein."—[*Calcutta Review.*]

To this, the authenticity of which is unquestionable, may be advantageously appended the following

MEMORANDUM BY BRIGADIER A. ROBERTS, C.B.

"The king, with the envoy and staff, spent the winter of 1839 at Jellalabad. I was one of the party, as I then commanded the Shah's troops. We all arrived at Caubul early in May of 1840. Sturt of the Engineers, was stationed at Caubul to fit up buildings for the troops and to construct new barracks. Soon after my arrival at Caubul, I looked at the ground selected by the engineer for barracks; and considering his plan most objectionable (which was long ranges of buildings the same as at Cawnpore or Meerutt), for a country where the cold in winter was in-

tense, and where no person considered life secure outside of a fort, I wrote as follows :—

Caubul, 9th May, 1840.

My dear Sturt,

Is it decided for what troops you are building barracks? for if the Shah's force is to be accommodated, I should like to suggest some alterations. Instead of having separate buildings for each company, I would strongly recommend squares for wings or regiments; the latter I would prefer, as I think they would possess many advantages for this country :—

1. Much less ground would be necessary.

2. One fourth of the sentries would not be required.

3. For European regiments visiting officers would find them much more convenient, and all bad characters could be prevented roving about the country.

4. With a parapet wall they could be easily defended, and which would be an object in the event of the troops being called away.

5. And I should think that the men being sheltered from the piercing cold and winds in winter would render them much less liable to the attacks in the lungs, which have proved so fatal.

6. Independent of the foregoing advantages, buildings so constructed would be better adapted for stores or serais, and if built in échêllon, could be easily defended.

I hope you will agree with me; however, I can have nothing to do with the plan, unless the Shah's troops are to be accommodated.

Yours sincerely,

A. Roberts.

"I was induced to write as above because many of the 13th Foot had died at Caubul during the winter from complaints in the lungs. The snow remains on the ground for a considerable time; the natives were expert thieves and assassins, and ten ranges of barracks would require at least sixty sentries. The Europeans would ramble, and no man was safe beyond the limit of cantonments.

"Upon a further examination of the ground I saw the site chosen was very objectionable, a small river running between it and the Balla Hissar, and it was, besides, commanded in two places. I received the following reply :—

Caubul, 10th May, 1840.

MY DEAR BRIGADIER,

I believe there is no chance at present of the Shah's force occupying the cantonments, as I am now portioning off the ground for the general staff of Sir Willoughby Cotton. Your recommendation, however, has come too late, for I have laid the foundation of one-half.

I know little about what is convenient or not. I submitted a plan to Sir W. Macnaghten. Whether it went farther than his military councils, I cannot say; but as I heard no more about it, I took silence for consent, and worked away.

Now the most must be made of it; but the barracks of one regiment will be of no great extent as it is, and will form a rectangle of 350 and 500 feet.

But it is useless questioning the expediency or otherwise now of any plan. Yours sincerely,

(Signed) J. STUBT.

"I was not much pleased with the contents of this letter, more especially from an officer who belonged to the force under my command; and as I had been, for many years, at the head of the building department in the upper provinces, and as the more I saw of the site and plan selected the more objectionable both appeared, I wrote to Captain Douglas, the Assistant Adjutant-General, whose reply was as follows:—

May 11th.

MY DEAR BRIGADIER,

Sir Willoughby saw and approved the plan of the new cantonments; if, therefore, you have any objection to the progress of the work, you have only to state them to the Envoy,

Yours, very truly,

(Signed) J. DOUGLAS.

"I accordingly stated my opinion to the Envoy; and as he appeared to agree with me, I was in hope that something would be done, but I was disappointed. By some it was considered that I was interfering with what did not concern me; but it was afterwards proved, to a sad degree, how badly the plan was suited to the country.

"I was afterwards anxious to place my men in a fort that was contiguous to the Balla Hissar, and which had become the property of the king from the traitorous conduct of the owner. To this the Envoy consented but afterwards changed his mind, and I was unable to get anything settled before I left the force.

"The engineer stated, that he 'had laid the foundation of one-half;' but this was of very little consequence, as the excavations for them were, in a great measure, filled up with the fruit trees cut into blocks, that had been cut down to make room for the barracks.

"It was afterwards found necessary (at a great expense) to excavate a ditch, to construct a strong wall, a banquet and parapets, but all were insufficient to keep out the Afghans.

"As the country became in a very unsettled state, and the town of Caubul full of armed men ripe for mischief, I waited on the Envoy and told him that I considered the treasure was very unsafe, as it was then lodged in the house occupied by Sir Alexander Burnes, and Captain Johnson, the paymaster of the force that I commanded, and which was in the heart of the city. At the time there was a very small force at Caubul. The Envoy agreeing with me, I ordered the treasure in to the Balla Hissar, where it was perfectly safe. Being, however, distant from the paymaster's quarters, it gave him and his clerks some additional trouble, and he wrote as follows to the Military Secretary :—

MY DEAR LAWRENCE,

Burnes is of opinion I might bring the treasure into the town, where it was before—that is to say at my house. This would be a very great convenience to me, for I am now considerably bothered, having to send up to the Balla Hissar for coin required. Kindly mention this to the Envoy, and if possible get it done,

Yours sincerely,

H. JOHNSON.

The guard would also strengthen our position here, two such valuable people. H. J.

Memo by Sir W. H. Macnaghten.

Johnson may, of course, put his treasure wherever he deems it most safe and convenient. W. M.

From Capt. Johnson to Brigadier Roberts.

MY DEAR BRIGADIER,

Macnaghten has allowed me to have the whole of the treasure at my house in the town. It amounts to close upon seven lacs. Will you kindly allow me whatever you may consider a sufficient guard to come to-morrow. I send for your perusal my note on the subject, and the Envoy's reply.

Yours sincerely,

H. JOHNSON.

"This correspondence surprised and annoyed me, situated as I was; but as I had differed so often with the Envoy regarding precautionary and other matters, the treasure was sent to the town. The disposable force at the time was very small; but a guard, of the strength for which there was accommodation, was furnished as before; at the same time I stated that there was great risk, and that the treasure was removed from the Balla Hissar entirely against the opinion of Brigade-Major Troup and myself; but I was considered an alarmist, and my opinion had no weight with the Envoy, who could not be persuaded that there was any necessity for precaution." *M. S.*

[*Book IV., chapter* 4, *page* 153.]

Copy of a Memorandum by the Duke of Wellington, on Sir W. H. Macnaghten's Letter of October 26, 1841.

January 29th, 1842. At night.

It is impossible to read the letter from Mr. Macnaghten to the Secretary to the Government in India, without being sensible of the precarious and dangerous position of our affairs in Central Asia.

Mr. Macnaghten complains of reports against the King, Shah Soojah Khan, and his government, as libels.

Of these we can know nothing; but I am convinced that no complaints or libels can be so strong as the facts stated by Mr. Macnaghten in this letter.

It appears that when Mr. Macnaghten heard of the first symptoms and first acts of this rebellion, he prevailed upon

the King to send a message to the rebels, inviting them to return to their allegiance.

The selection of the person sent is curious—Humza Khan, the Governor of Caubul. His mission failed, of course, says Mr. Macnaghten, because Humza Khan was the chief instigator of the rebellion!

We know in this country something of the customs of those countries—of the meaning of some of the native expressions in this letter. It appears that there are four thanahs, or posts, between Caubul and Gundamuck. A thanah is either a permanent or a temporary post, to guard a road or district of importance. We have seen who the person was, selected to induce the rebels to submit; let us now see who were the persons appointed to take charge of those thanahs or posts in the disturbed country—those named in the subsequent part of the despatch as the very men who were the leaders in the rebellion, in the attack, and destruction, and murder, of the East India Company's officers and troops!

No libels can state facts against the Afghan Government stronger than these.

But Mr. Macnaghten has discovered that the Company's troops are not sufficiently active personally, nor are they sufficiently well armed for the warfare in Afghanistan. Very possibly an Afghan will run over his native hills faster than an Englishman or a Hindoo. But we have carried on war in hill countries, as well in Hindostan and the Deccan as in the Spanish Peninsula; and I never heard that our troops were not equal, as well in personal activity as by their arms, to contend with and overcome any natives of hills whatever. Mr. Macnaghten ought to have learnt by this time that hill countries are not conquered, and their inhabitants kept in subjection, solely by running up the hills and firing at long distances. The whole of a hill country of which it is necessary to keep possession, particularly for the communications of the army, should be occupied by sufficient bodies of troops, well supplied, and capable of maintaining themselves; and not only not a Ghilzye or insurgent should be able to run up and down hills, but not a cat or a goat, except under the fire of those occupying the hills. This is

the mode of carrying on the war, and not by hiring Afghans with long matchlocks to protect and defend the communications of the British army.

Shah Soojah Khan may have in his service any troops that he and Mr. Macnaghten please.

But if the troops in the service of the East India Company are not able, armed and equipped as they are, to perform the service required of them in Central Asia, I protest against their being left in Afghanistan. It will not do to raise, pay, and discipline matchlock-men, in order to protect the British troops and their communications, discovered by Mr. Macnaghten to be no longer able to protect themselves.

WELLINGTON.

[*MS. Records.*]

CAUSES OF THE KOHISTAN REVOLT.

[*Book IV., chapter* 4, *page* 157.]

"In the year 1839, on the accession of Shah Soojah, he granted to the Kohistanee chiefs, who had embraced his cause and raised the insurrection (which so paralysed the movements of Dost Mahomed Khan), an increase of wages, amounting to five hundred tomauns a year, which sum, however, was not payable in ready money, but by order on the land-tax of the chief himself, or on that of some turbulent district where regular payment was doubtful, and the influence of the chief necessary to secure any payment at all. The value of the sum thus given, might, therefore, in the government amount be rated at nothing. I may here mention that all the pay, as termed, of these chiefs, was of the same kind; and I am not aware of any instance in which the amount surpassed that of the land-tax payable by the chief, or, indeed, equalled it; and, in my opinion, it would have been better to have released the chiefs altogether then from the payment of that tax, for the manner of realising it was one of the greatest grievances, as our power rendered it unnecessary for the tax-gatherers to show the same consideration for these nobles which they had formerly been.

obliged to do. Our instructions not to interfere in these internal affairs, rendered us powerless to afford relief, though we saw discontent and disloyalty growing around us. During the year 1840 the chiefs in the different parts of the country found that the change of government was inimical to their interests and power, insomuch that it had given them a master who was able to compel obedience, instead of one who was obliged to overlook their excesses in exchange for their support. They therefore gladly revolted to support the return of Dost Mahomed Khan. No doubt other causes largely combined to irritate them. Hatred of foreign domination, fanaticism, the licentiousness of the troops, and especially the impunity with which women could be seduced and carried off in a country celebrated for the strictness of the late ruler on this point, and the extreme jealousy of the natives. The consequence of this revolt was the despatch of General Sale's force to the Kohistan in the autumn of that year. The force was too weak for the destruction of the rebels; and Sir A. Burnes, the Political Agent, with a force, found it necessary to temporise and treat with all who had not made themselves very remarkable in opposition; and of those who had, the most extreme step ventured upon was delivering over the possessions of the rebel to his cousin, or nearest of kin, who was of the royal party; and Sir A. Burnes (under the authority of Sir W. H. Macnaghten, afterwards sanctioned by the Governor-General in Council) promised to those persons, and the others who had remained neuter during the contest (joining us at the end), that they should enjoy the pay and advantages promised on the succession of Shah Soojah. It was also understood that no alteration would afterwards be made. These agreements were made by Prince Timour, who had plenary powers from his father, and the arrangements were finally approved of by the Shah himself; and under the feeling that the promises of the British Government would be sacredly observed, the discontented who remained untouched sate down and turned their attention to agriculture."—[*Major Pottinger's Report. MS. Records.*]

WARNINGS TO SIR ALEXANDER BURNES.

[*Book V., chapter* 1, *page* 169.]

"Before daylight a well-wisher of Burnes came to report to him that a plan had been hatched during the night, which had for its chief object his murder. Unfortunately, Sir Alexander could not be convinced that the man was telling the truth, and paid no heed to what he said. Shortly after, the Wuzeer, Oosman Khan, arrived (by this time the mob was assembling). The Wuzeer urged him to leave his house, and proceed to cantonments. Sir Alexander scorned the idea of quitting his house, as he had every hope of quelling the disturbance; and let the worst come to the worst he felt too well assured that neither the Envoy nor General would permit him to be sacrificed whilst in the performance of his public duty, so long as there were 6000 men within two miles of him."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal: MS. Records.*] "The King's minister went to Burnes early on the morning of the 2nd, and warned him of what was about to happen—of the danger of remaining in his house—and requested him to accompany him to the Balla Hissar; but he was deaf to all entreaties, incredulous, and persevered in disbelief that any outbreak was intended; yet I am told he wrote into cantonments for a military force to protect him."—[*Letters of Brigadier Shelton: MS. Records.*] The native friend said by Captain Johnson to have warned Burnes early in the morning of the 2nd of November that his life was in danger, was Taj Mahomed, who, as stated elsewhere in a note, on the authority of Mohun Lal (and the same story is told by Lieutenant Eyre and Lady Sale, in their journals), visited Burnes on the preceding night. Bowh Singh, Burnes's chuprassie, the only surviving witness of what passed in that officer's house upon the fatal morning, says that his master did not wake before the arrival of the Wuzeer, and that the man (Wullee Mahomed by name), who had called to warn Burnes of his danger, was not admitted, nor was his message ever delivered. "On the day of the murder," says this witness,

"as early as three o'clock in the morning, a Cossid (Wullee Mahomed) came to me. I was on duty outside; he said, 'Go, and inform your master immediately that there is a tumult in the city, and that the merchants are removing their goods and valuables from the shops.' I knew what my master had said on the subject the day before, so I did not like awakening him, but put on my chuprass, and went to the Char Chouk. Here I met the Wuzeer, Nizam-ood-Dowlah, going towards my master's house. I immediately turned with him, and on my arrival awoke my master, who dressed quickly, and went to the Wuzeer, and talked to him some time." As this man speaks of what he saw, and what he did on the morning of the 2nd of November, I conceive that his evidence is the best that is now obtainable. He states that "Sir Alexander Burnes was duly informed by his Afghan servants, the day previous to his murder, that there was a stir in the city, and that if he remained in it his life would be in danger; they told him he had better go to the cantonments; this he declined doing, giving as his reason that the Afghans never received any injury from him, but, on the contrary, he had done much for them, and that he was quite sure they would never injure him,"

A statement of a directly contrary tendency has, however, been made by Lieutenant Mackenzie, late of the 41st Regiment, who has illustrated the melancholy history of our Caubul disasters in a poem of twelve cantos. "I am enabled," he says, "to state positively, on the authority of a letter from Sir Alexander Burnes himself (one of the last he ever wrote, and addressed to an officer of high rank, and one of his most intimate friends), that poor Burnes had long foreseen the crisis which had arrived; for, in the letter alluded to, he states his conviction in the most solemn terms that he was a marked man and would inevitably be the first victim;—but, nevertheless, he would never flinch from what he conceived to be his duty, although all his warnings had been disregarded."

INDECISION OF GENERAL ELPHINSTONE.

[*Book V., chapter* 2, *p.* 187.]

The following is the letter alluded to in the text; written by General Elphinstone to the Envoy on the 2nd of November:—

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

Since you left me, I have been considering what can be done to-morrow. Our dilemma is a difficult one. Shelton, if re-inforced to-morrow, might, no doubt, force in two columns on his way towards the Lahore gate, and we might from hence force in that gate and meet them. But if this were accomplished, what shall we gain? It can be done, but not without very great loss, as our people will be exposed to the fire from the houses the whole way. Where is the point you said they were to fortify near Burnes's house? If they could assemble there, that would be a point of attack; but to march into the town, it seems, we should only have to come back again; and as to setting the city on fire, I fear, from its construction, that is almost impossible. We must see what the morning brings, and then think what can be done. The occupation of all the houses near the gates might give us a command of the town, but we have not means of extended operations. If we could depend on the Kuzzilbashes, we might easily reduce the city.

Yours, truly,

W. K. ELPHINSTONE.

DEATHS OF LIEUTENANT RATTRAY AND CAPTAIN CODRINGTON.

[*Book V., chapter* 4, *pages* 227—231.]

Some interesting particulars of the deaths of Lieutenant Rattray and Captain Codrington are given in a narrative of the events at Charekur, supplied by Major Pottinger's Moonshee. It appears that some chiefs had warned the former officer that if he left the fort he would be killed by the people outside; but that Rattray had replied, "They have eaten our salt, and could not be guilty of such an act."

The Moonshee then goes on to say: "When Mr. Rattray came near them, all the chiefs paid their respects to him, saying, 'Inshallah! we shall go to-morrow and fight with Meer Musjedee.' Mr. R. said, 'Very good! If you will go, I shall give your people presents on their return; and to-morrow they shall receive five rupees each for their expenses, and I will also go with my sowars.' Mr. R. then turned to go back to the fort; but Jubbar Khan asked him to look at his men, to which he agreed, and turned back again. When he had taken about six or seven steps, one of the Kohistanees called him by name, and ran at him, firing his gun at Mr. R., who turned and ran towards the fort. I, the Meerza, and the Chuprassie, all ran towards the fort. When I had nearly reached it I looked back, and saw Mr. R. lying down on the plain. I ran again towards him, and when near him, he called me, and told me to take hold of him and help him into the fort. Directly I took hold of his hand about fifty Kohistanees fired, and Mr. R. received a ball in his forehead. I then ran back and got into the fort, where I found Major Pottinger looking towards the Kohistanees, and firing at them." The touching circumstances of Captain Codrington's death are thus related:—"When Captain Codrington saw that Major Pottinger was wounded, he went out to the two companies; but was very severely wounded by a shot in the back. All his Sepoys began to cry for him. . . . . Captain Codrington was able to walk into cantonments; but fell down before he reached his house, and asked for water. We carried him and laid him on the same bed as Major Pottinger, whom he asked for pen, ink, and paper, and wrote a letter to his wife, whose picture he also gave to Major Pottinger. He lingered on until the night of the 7th, when he died. We buried him and Lieutenant Salisbury in one grave."—[*MS. Records.*]

SECRET WRITING.

[*Books IV. and V. passim.*]

In the letter quoted in the above-named page, the Envoy alludes to the system of secret writing which has now super-

seded the old plan of correspondence by cypher; and as at a later period, during General Pollock's occupation of the passes between Peshawur and Caubul, it was found of the utmost service to our officers, it may be interesting to describe the method in the words of the Envoy: "Are you in possession of the *hikmut* of concealed writing, by means of conjee-water and a solution of iodine? This is much better than any cypher. The paper is to all appearance blank, but when rubbed over with the solution, the words written with conjee-water start into life, as it were, most miraculously. Something unimportant is generally written with common ink, and what is intended as secret is interlined with conjee-water. Try this some day. Any medical man in your neighbourhood will give the solution. The paper intended to be used should first have a gentle coat of the solution passed over it, and suffered to dry."

In another letter to the same correspondent, the Envoy again adverts to this mode of cypher writing: "I find it is not necessary to prepare the paper in the first instance. You write on ordinary paper, and having spread a solution of iodine over it, the invisible writing becomes apparent. When there is any writing of this kind on my paper, I shall put the day of the month in letters, instead of figures. Perhaps you would adopt the same sign."

SIR WILLIAM MACNAGHTEN AND THE PRICE OF BLOOD.

[*Book V., chapter* 5, *pages* 265—267.]

[The following passages, containing much authentic evidence relating to this painful subject, is extracted from the *Friend of India* (Serampore newspaper).]

"To crown the evidence of Sir William Macnaghten's never having been implicated in this alleged assassination of the two chiefs, we have an acknowledgment under Mohun Lal's own signature. When he was claiming remuneration for his services of the Court of Directors, he delivered in the following document, which has been copied for us from a paper in his own handwriting.

Advanced to Abdool Aziz, who offered to kill Abdoollah Khan, by such means which the Envoy did not approve, therefore the balance 11,000 rupees was not paid . .	Rs. 4,000

"Thus it appears that while Mohun Lal told the Reviewer that Sir William objected to pay the balance, because he had not seen the heads; he told the Court of Directors that the balance was not paid because the Envoy did not approve of the means that had been used!" * * * *

Major Colin Troup writes thus in a letter now before us:

"Akbar Khan never would allow Macnaghten's name to be mentioned before him but in terms of the greatest respect; and has in private, both to poor Pottinger and myself, over and over again regretted the deed, and stated that it never was premeditated; so far the contrary, that, having been accused by Ameen-oollah's party of being friendly to, and intriguing with the English, to disarm suspicion, he in open Durbar volunteered, if he was allowed time, to bring Macnaghten a prisoner into Ameen-oollah's house within eight days. This being agreed to, it was then that he planned the treacherous conference with Sir William; but, finding, after some delay, that he was not likely to accomplish his object, and fearing to meet his party if he failed in his boasted adventure, and hearing a cry that our troops were marching out of the cantonments to where he and Sir William were sitting, he, in a moment of desperation, out with his pistol and shot Sir William; but he always loudly declared that on the morning of the conference, when he came out to meet Sir William, he never for one moment contemplated doing him any harm whatever. I have all this written down, and can, if necessary, take my oath to what I have written, as coming from the mouth of Akbar Khan himself, and you are most welcome to make what use of it you please, in defence of the character of one of the brightest ornaments our country ever did, or ever will produce." . . . . . We have the most abundant evidence that Sir William Macnaghten's character for integrity and good faith always stood equally high among the Afghans; and that when their chiefs were triumphant, and bitterly reproached the British prisoners for the wrongs

their nation had inflicted on Afghanistan, the charge of encouraging assassination was never whispered for a moment. Lieutenant-Colonel Lawrence states: "During our lengthened imprisonment, I unhesitatingly affirm that not one of the prisoners ever heard Mahomed Akbar, or any of the chiefs, accuse Sir William of bribing men to assassinate them; and it is not likely they would have been silent, if they had so heavy a charge to bring forward. On the contrary, I, as well as others, have heard both Mahomed Akbar Khan and other chiefs express deep regret at the Envoy's untimely death, and much admiration of his character. Ameen-oollah Khan, when I was his prisoner, told me that Sir W. H. Macnaghten had offered a lakh of rupees for his head. Prisoner though I was, I denounced it in open Durbar as an infamous lie, and never heard any more about it." Captain Colin Mackenzie writes: "If Sir William had ever instructed Mohun Lal or any other person to employ assassins for the removal of our treacherous and inveterate enemies, it would have been well known to the Afghans themselves, and they would not have failed to urge so plausible a ground of complaint against us, while we were captives in their hands, which they never did, although they constantly reproached us with every act of supposed injustice on the part of government, and with the private vices and improprieties of individuals." Captain W. Anderson, another of the prisoners, writes: "I never heard any Afghan accuse Sir W. H. Macnaghten of any acts for which any friend of his, or any Englishman, need feel ashamed. On the contrary, I always heard him spoken of with great respect, and frequently with admiration." Captain Warburton states: "I went into Caubul to the Newab's on the 28th, I think, of December, 1841. I remained in his house till we were forced out of it on the 12th of April following. During that time no one was prevented seeing us. Our party consisted of J. Conolly, Airey, Walsh, Webb, Drummond, and myself (besides Haughton and Campbell, who joined us afterwards). We had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with most of the chiefs at Caubul, who remained after Akbar Khan had left. None of these people ever concealed their opinions regarding the acts of our government or people.

Ameen-oollah Khan, in particular, spoke at times very strongly, but neither from him, nor from any other, during the period of my residence, did I ever hear a word regarding the charge now brought forward against Sir William of having offered money for the assassination of the chiefs. I had sufficient opportunities of hearing something about the matter, if any such offer had been made."

THE QUESTION OF CAPITULATION.

[*Book V., chapter* 5, *pages* 270—272.]

The following are the letters referred to in the text, which passed between the Envoy and the General, from the 5th to the 8th of December:

5th December.

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

It becomes my duty to inform you that our stock of provisions is reduced to nine days, on half-rations; it therefore becomes imperative upon us to consider what can be done. We have, for the last few days, been disappointed in our expectation of getting any, and our hopes of success in doing this seem every day less. The objections to retreat on the Balla Hissar I have already stated; our wants there might be the same, with the additional one of fuel, and part of our ordnance for protection. Retreat without terms I think with you almost impossible, and that few would reach Jellalabad. The only alternative (as there now seems little chance of the Ghilzyes renewing the negotiation you were led to expect), is to try if terms can be made in any other quarter, if we do not hear something favourable to-morrow. With provisions we could hold out, but without them I do not see what can be done, or how we are to avert starvation. It is true the responsibility is great, and may fall on us; but are we justified in risking the safety of so many people when we can no longer do anything? When reduced to the last extremity (where we now are almost), I think honourable terms better for our government than our being destroyed here, which, without food, is inevitable. All this I write in confidence for your own consideration, that you may think what is best to be done, as I have told our real situation.

Yours, truly,

W. K. E.

December 5.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I have received your note of this morning. I am perfectly aware of the state of our supplies; but as we have nine days' provision, and had only provisions for one or two days when the siege commenced, I conceive that we are better off now than we were a month ago. Whenever we go, we could not carry with us more than two or three days' supplies, and, therefore, it does not seem necessary to come to an immediate decision. But I will speak to you on the subject to-morrow, and will omit no favourable opportunity of negotiating.

W. H. M.

(Private.) Cantonments, 6th Dec., 1841.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I now proceed to give you my opinion on your note of yesterday. There are three courses which may be said to be open to us. First, a retreat on Jellalabad, without terms. Secondly, a retreat to India, with terms, abandoning our position in this country. And, thirdly, to retire into the Balla Hissar. The first I regard as impracticable; and, if practicable, the adoption of such a measure would cover us with everlasting infamy, as we could not take the King's family along with us, and his Majesty would not stir without them. The second I regard as nearly equally impracticable, from the conflicting interests of the parties with whom we should have to treat. This cause would, I think, render any promised protection ineffectual, and, if this course could be safely adopted, the consequences would be terrific as regards the safety of our Indian Empire and our interests in Europe. The third course seems to me (though certainly attended with risk) to be by far the most safe and honourable which we could adopt. With four or five disposable regiments in the Balla Hissar, it would be strange if we could not obtain fuel and provisions; we should be in a position to overawe the city, and to encourage the Kuzzilbashes and our other well-wishers to come forward to our support; and we should probably find in the Balla Hissar provisions for a fortnight or a month. I would, therefore, lose no time in sending every night, by all possible contrivances, our stores, and sick, and wounded. Should the report of the advance of troops from Candahar prove correct (which we shall, in all probability, hear to-morrow), all our troubles will cease. Should we have reason to believe it unfounded, we can then commence destroying our powder and superfluous stores. In the mean

time, I think we have daily proofs that the forces of our enemies are diminishing; and, with the blessing of Providence, some event may arise from their misunderstandings to relieve us from our present perilous position, even without the accession of fresh troops.

Very sincerely yours,

W. H. M.

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

Since your departure, I have thought over, and given my utmost attention to, every part of the subject of our conversation. The first proposition was a night expedition against the Deh-Hadjee, said to be distant about three coss, part of the road through a narrow gorge, through which I now hear guns could not go; and I am also told that parties (of cavalry) have, for the last five or six days, been seen going in that direction: no doubt for the object of preventing our getting supplies. If we succeed in taking the fort (if only one), we must hold it (to enable us to remove any quantity of grain with our means) for some time; during which, the enemy, hearing of our attack, would, no doubt, come out against our detachment; and from Captain Johnson's account, it is difficult to find grain. Another difficulty is our want of local knowledge (this may, perhaps, be obtained). These are the objections that present themselves to this plan.

With respect to a like enterprise on Killa Bolundee, that appears, I confess (and I would willingly grasp at anything to enable us to hold out), to be more difficult, from the facility with which a party might be cut off by a sortie from the city. The other alternative is the Balla Hissar; from thence seems the only chance we have of getting supplies; and as you now think our being able to make any terms is impossible, that seems the only one left. Colonel Chambers has been with me, and says his horses would be quite unequal to a forced march to Jellalabad, and that many of those of Anderson's regiment are unserviceable from want of food. Captain Anderson reported, this morning, one-half.

After leaving cantonments, terms, I should suppose, are quite out of the question; our quitting would be, I presume, considered as our total defeat; and, until reinforced, as we must sacrifice nearly all our cattle, we would not have the power of moving, for, without the means of transport, we would not go.

The next consideration is, whether our being annihilated here, or entering into honourable terms, would have the worst effect for our government. The responsibility is great for you and I; and

(if we do not hear of the force from Candahar to-morrow) it only remains for us to consider whether we shall incur the responsibility, or risk the loss of this force; for, under the most favourable view we can take, the risk is great. Looking practically at the obstacles we have, they are in reality very difficult to surmount.

I submit all this for your consideration, and have sent Major Thain with this to you.

Yours, &c.,

W. K. E.

We must not think of treating, after any attempt either to retreat, or go to the Balla Hissar, or if we fail in any attempt. We are now comparatively entire; a loss or failure would increase our destitution, and the terms will, of course, be worse. We could not expect anything else.

Dec. 8, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

The commissary has just reported to me, that on examination of the grain he has in store, he finds from the quantity of dirt mixed with it, he has not above four days' supplies left, at most. Under these circumstances, it becomes absolutely necessary for us to come to a decision as to our future measures, as I do not see how we are to hold out, without food for our Sepoys, beyond that time.

Yours truly,

W. K. E.

THE SURRENDER OF THE FORTS.

[*Book VI., chapter I., page* 291.]

The subjoined letters are those to which reference is made in the text:

Dec. 16, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

I wish you would write me an official letter, with your opinion as to the necessity of giving up the forts, in furtherance of your negotiations. I think, if absolutely necessary, it must be done. Our situation cannot be made worse, but I think they ought to take them one at a time, beginning with Zoolfikar's (the grain fort) and the Ricka-Bashee, they sending us supplies. This will be a mutual proof of confidence: the abandoning of these forts if they are not

sincere, giving up these cantonments and the possibility of retreat from them. Of *course* the hostages will be sent, as you think they ought to be: pray name them in your letter, if they have offered, or you proposed any.

I herewith return the two letters from Trevor and Captain Drummond.

Yours truly,

W. K. E.

The magazine fort is, in fact, part of our cantonments, and ought for the present to be dispensed with, as an act of courtesy and faith to us.

December 16, 1841.

SIR,

I have the honour to acquaint you that I have received a proposition from Mahomed Oosman Khan and Ameen-oollah Khan, to the effect that we should give up to them certain forts in the vicinity of the cantonments, with a view to convince the population of the sincerity of our intention to leave the country; by which arrangement also they stated that they would be able to supply us punctually with provisions.

I am aware of the objections to such an arrangement in a military point of view; but as I am of opinion that the proposition has emanated from a suspicion of our intentions, rather than from any sinister motive on the part of the Afghan chiefs, I would strongly recommend that the proposition be complied with. We are clearly completely in the power of our new allies as regards the article of provisions; and it is not clear to me what other course than compliance is open to us. By this course we show confidence, and have at least the chance of making a safe and honourable retreat out of the country: whereas, by refusal, we may exasperate those with whom we are treating, and be utterly cut off from the means of subsistence.

Since the above was written, I have received an intimation that no further supplies will be sent us, until the proposition of the chiefs be complied with; and I request that you will inform me whether you are prepared to give up the forts

(The new Magazine Fort,
The Musjeed,
The Fort of Zoolfikar,
The Fort of Ricka-Bashee)

this afternoon.

The chiefs have promised that thirty men, who shall be under control, are to occupy each of the places to be delivered up; and I hope that the brother of Newab Mahomed Zemaun Khan will reside in the cantonment as a hostage until our departure.

I have the honour to be, &c., &c.,

W. H. M.

Head-Quarters, Caubul, Dec. 16, 1841.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day's date; in reply to which I beg to say that, from the emergency of the case, as therein stated, I see no alternative left us but to give up the forts mentioned to the chiefs with whom you are treating; and I shall accordingly give orders for their being vacated and delivered over to the persons who may be authorised to receive them, immediately on your intimating their arrival.

I have the honour, &c.,

W. K. ELPHINSTONE, Major-Gen.,
Commanding in Afghanistan.

SUPPLIES FROM THE AFGHANS.

[*Book VI., chapter I., pages* 291, 292.]

Captain Johnson's journal furnishes the best information extant relative to the measures taken throughout the siege, and after the capitulation, to supply the force with provisions. Under dates *Dec. 12th* and *13th*, he writes: "A few provisions sent into cantonments by the Sirdars. A lakh of rupees advanced to Mahomed Akbar for the purchase of camels—not one as yet forthcoming. The Seeah-Sungh gateway, through which all supplies come in, is daily infested by parties of Afghans, calling themselves *Ghazees*, or fighters for religion. They are, without exception, the most barefaced, impertinent scoundrels under the sun. Armed with swords, daggers, and matchlocks, they acknowledge no chief, but act independently—they taunt and insult the whole of us. Not a Sepoy can venture twelve paces from the bridge over the ditch without being plundered of what he has. People from the town, bringing in grain or *boosah* (bran), are often plundered and beaten. Although

our cattle and men are starving, no measures are taken by our military authorites to check all this. It is true, our ramparts are lined with our soldiers, and plenty of cannon at each bastion, and a six-pounder at the bridge loaded with grape—but to what purpose? Our men are told, on no account to fire upon the Afghans, without the most urgent necessity, for fear of putting a stop to the good feeling existing on their part. The chiefs have been applied to, to use their influence to prevent these people assembling near our cantonments. Their reply is, 'We cannot do so—they are not under our controul; but if they misbehave themselves, fire upon them.' To-day, I was at the Seeah-Sungh gateway, anxiously looking out for some food for my public cattle. About thirty loads of *boosah* came to within six paces of the bridge, and where the guard was standing. The officer on duty, as also the field officer of the week, was there. The wretched rabble above alluded to, stopped the drivers of the donkeys and abused them, beat them and ordered them back, and threatened them with more ill-usage in the event of their returning to sell any article to the Feringhees. This was reported by me to the General, and there it ended."

And again, on the 15th, the active commissariat officer writes: "A few supplies sent into cantonments, and people still bringing in private speculations; but are subjected to the same ill-treatment as noticed on the 12th and 13th. Attah and barley sell from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 and 4 seers the rupee (from 3lb. to 6lb. and 8lb. for 2*s*.) . . . To-day a flock of sheep belonging to cantonments was grazing outside of the walls, under the care of the shepherd. Two men attacked him close under where our sentries, with loaded muskets, were standing. The shepherd fled, and so did the two men with the whole flock of sheep, and drove them along the whole face of cantonment. Report made to the General, whose reply was, 'They had no business to go outside;' and all this time our garrison starving!"—[*Captain Johnson's Journal: MS. Records.*]

CIRCUMSTANCES PRECEDING THE DEATH OF THE ENVOY.

[*Book VI., chapter I., pages* 299, 300.]

Statement of Captain Mackenzie.

"The proposition which induced the Envoy (in opposition to his theretofore avowed principle and practice in refusing to meet Mahomed Akbar or any of the other Khans, save in a body) to grant the fatal interview to the Sirdar and his more immediate confederates, had emanated from the murderer himself, and had been conveyed to the Envoy the night previously by Mahomed Sadig Khan, half brother of Akbar, by Surwar Khan Lohanee, who came into the cantonment in company with the late Captain Skinner, then released for the first time from the custody in which he had been retained, first by Ameen-oollah Khan, and latterly by Mahomed Akbar himself.

"The Sirdar had acquainted Captain Skinner with the nature of his pretended wishes, as if in friendly conference, requesting him to act the part of chief ambassador, Captain Skinner's disapproval of which in all probability saved his life for the time being; but he, Captain Skinner, was the only officer present during the eventful conference of the evening of the 22nd, and from him I subsequently derived the information, which I now give, of the nature of Mahomed Akbar's message. It was to this effect,—that he and his particular friends (to wit, the Ghilzyes) should either come over in a body into the cantonment, placing themselves under the orders of the Envoy, or that, at a preconcerted signal, without giving warning to the other confederates, in concert with a body of British troops, take possession of the fort of Mahmood Khan; then seizing the person of Ameen-oollah Lohganee, whom for a pecuniary reward they proposed to murder; that the Sirdar should acknowledge Shah Soojah for his sovereign, his reward being the payment—a present bonus from the British Government—of thirty lakhs of rupees, and a stipend of four lakhs of rupees per annum for life; that the British troops should be allowed

to remain unmolested, as if with the perfect concurrence and by the express wish of the so-formed Afghan Government, for a period of six months, at which time they were to evacuate the country as if by their own free will, thus carrying with them an untarnished reputation (the expression was 'saving their *Purdah*'), and thus securing a favourable opportunity for the British home Government to negotiate a treaty to the security of our Indian frontier with the cabinet of St. Petersburgh. Up to that date, viz., 22nd of December, Sir Wm. Macnaghten had, in spite of his conscientious fulfilment of his verbal engagements with the assembled Khawaneen (for no written treaty had theretofore been exchanged), been worn out by their utter falsehood and bad faith, their original demands having risen to a pitch of insolence and unreasonableness which amounted to open mockery—their conduct had, in fact, virtually released him from any obligation to adhere to any of his original propositions; and in despair, as a drowning man catches at straws, the troops having long before proved themselves utterly inadequate to his support, or in fact to their own protection, with immediate ruin and disgrace to himself and his country staring him in the face, he was in an evil moment induced to assent to the above proposals, with the exception of the *murder* of Ameen-oollah, from which (Captain S. assured me) he shrank with abhorrence and disgust, assuring the ambassadors that as a British functionary nothing would induce him to pay a price for blood. So far as it may be said that the late Envoy allowed himself to be duped by a man of the notoriously bad character of Mahomed Akbar Khan in all matters of good faith, even among his treacherous countrymen, I can only say that it is not only my firm belief, but that also of Captain Lawrence, and others who best knew Sir William, that two months of incessant fatigue of mind and body, and the load of care which had during that time weighed him down, had at last completely unhinged his strong mind. Contrary to his usual practice, he consulted none of those who had all along possessed his perfect confidence; his manner was flurried and agitated; and when, previous to leaving the cantonment on the morning of the 23rd, I, having for the first time learnt

his intentions, declared my conviction 'that it was a trap,' he abruptly answered, 'Leave me to manage that: trust me for that.' He also observed, I believe, to Captains Trevor and Lawrence, while riding forth to the scene of his murder, 'Death is preferable to the life we are leading now.'"—[*Answer to Interrogatories put by Gen. Pollock. MS. Records.*]

Mohun Lal's Statement.

Mohun Lal's story, as given in a letter to Mr. Colvin, is worth quoting, though its meaning is somewhat obscured by its dubious phraseology:—"Mahomed Akbar, being afraid of the union to the Douranees with the Shah, induced Surwar Khan and others, by the hope of reward, to deceive the Envoy, by saying that he will either spread dissension in the city to allow us to remain in the country, see us safely pass down to Jellalabad, or act as the Envoy tells him, on the condition that Mahomed Akbar was to receive four lakhs of rupees annually, besides the reward of thirty lakhs from the British Government, and made the Vizier of the Suddozye King from generation to generation. As soon as I heard this by the Persian chief, I wrote to the Envoy that Mahomed Akbar was deceiving us, and he should place no faith in anything he says. I also particularly informed him that he may give money to anybody he likes, to espouse the cause of the Shah and us, but never to the chiefs, as it will not induce them to do us service like the others, but will incite and prepare them against us. Unfortunately he was assured by Surwar Khan, Naib Ameer, &c., of their favourable service, and to advance lakhs of rupees. He was also prompted by these individuals to give the paper of the above-mentioned agreement to Mahomed Akbar. He showed it, and said falsely to Ameen-oollah that the Envoy has promised the money it contains, if Mahomed Akbar were to kill, catch, or send him alive to the Envoy. Ameen-oollah threw himself at his feet, and said he is doing all this against us merely for the good of his father, and he (Akbar) has sense to know it perfectly; therefore he should not lose time either to catch or murder the Envoy, which will procure him all the

power and money he wishes. I wrote all this to the Envoy on the very morning of his murder, begged him to take very great care of himself, and do not go so often to meet Mahomed Akbar out of the cantonment, as he is the man that nobody can trust his word upon oath. I also added that the Douranees, as well as Ameen-oollah (the instigation of Akbar), being jealous of the return of his father, have taken the part of the Shah, and will, in the course of two days, wait upon his Majesty, ask us to remain here in the hope of receiving the money promised them by me."—[*MS. Records.*]

SIR WILLIAM MACNAGHTEN'S REPORT OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CAUBUL OUTBREAK.

[Found unfinished in the Envoy's desk after his death.]

[*Book V. and Book VI., chapter I.*]

SIR,

1. It is with feelings of the deepest concern that I acquaint you, for the information of the Right Honourable the Governor-General in Council, of my having been compelled to consent to the abandonment of our position in this country.

2. The Major-General commanding in Afghanistan will doubtless detail the military disasters which have led to this direful necessity; and I shall have occasion, therefore, to touch upon them but briefly in the course of this narrative.

3. On the morning of the 2nd ult., I was informed that the town of Caubul was in a state of commotion, and shortly afterwards I received a note from Lieutenant-Colonel Sir A. Burnes, to the effect that his house was besieged, and begging for assistance. I immediately went to General Elphinstone, and suggested that Brigadier Shelton's force should proceed to the Balla Hissar, thence to operate as might seem expedient; that the remaining troops should be concentrated, the cantonment placed in a state of defence, and assistance; if possible, sent to Sir A. Burnes.

4. Before Brigadier Shelton could reach the Balla Hissar, the town had attained such a state of ferment that it was

deemed impracticable to penetrate to Sir A. Burnes's residence, which was in the centre of the city. I also sent messages of assurance to his Majesty by my assistant (Captain Lawrence), but so great had become the excitement, that, by noon, the road between the cantonment and the city was hardly passable.

5. His Majesty, on first hearing of the insurrection, had sent out his son, Futteh Jung, and the Minister, with some of the household troops, to repress it; but this party was speedily repulsed with great slaughter, and in the meantime I grieve to state that Sir Alexander Burnes, his brother, Lieutenant C. Burnes, and Captain W. Broadfoot, had fallen victims to the fury of the mob.

6. From that time affairs grew generally worse. The enemy showed great judgment in their work of annoying us. They seized the strongest positions between the cantonment and the city, and, what was worse than all, they seized the fort which contained all our stores and provisions. This step was well-nigh effecting our immediate destruction, and it is chiefly to it that I attribute our final discomfiture. We had only four or five days' supplies for the cantonment. The Balla Hissar, as well as the cantonment, was in a state of siege. We could not hope for provisions from thence, nor would the place have afforded us either food or shelter, and, in the opinion of the military authorities, to return thither would have been attended with ruin. A disastrous retreat seemed the only alternative, but this necessity was averted by the attack, on the 10th ult., of a neighbouring fort, which had intermediately furnished us with a scanty supply of provisions, but which subsequently espoused the cause of the rebels. The place was carried after a desperate resistance. We lost in the operation no less than sixty men killed and wounded of her Majesty's 44th Regiment alone, but our immediate wants were supplied by the provisions found in the fort. I lament to add, that Colonel Mackrell, Captain M'Crae, and Captain Westmacott, fell on the occasion.

7. On the 6th ult. I received a hurried note from Major Pottinger, to the effect that he was closely besieged at Charekar, and unable to hold out for want of water. Major

Pottinger himself, with Lieutenant Haughton, came into cantonments a day or two afterwards, having left the 4th Regiment in a disorganised state in the neighbourhood of Istaleff; but, melancholy to relate, that no authentic tidings of them have up to this day been received. There is every reason to believe that the entire corps (officers and men) have been annihilated. Captains Codrington and Rattray and Lieutenant Salisbury were killed before Major Pottinger left Charekar, and both he and Lieutenant Haughton were severely wounded.

8. I had written to Candahar and to Gundamuck for assistance immediately on the occurrence of the outbreak, but General Sale's brigade had proceeded to Jellalabad, the whole country between this and that place being in a state of insurrection, and a return to Caubul being deemed impracticable. From Candahar, though I sent Cossids with pressing requisitions for assistance almost every day, I could gain no intelligence, the road being entirely occupied by the troops and emissaries of the rebels. We learnt from native reports that Ghuznee was invested by the enemy, and that Captain Woodburn, who was on his way to Caubul from Candahar, had been massacred, with a party of leave-of-absence men by whom he was accompanied, in a small fort on this side of Ghuznee.

9. We continued, up to the commencement of the present month, to derive a scanty supply, at great pecuniary sacrifices, from the neighbouring villages, but about that time the enemy's plans had become so well organised, that our supplies from this source were cut off. The rebels daily made their appearance in great force in the neighbourhood of the cantonment, and I lament to add that their operations were generally attended with success. The details will be communicated by the military authorities. In the midst of their successes Mahomed Akbar Khan arrived from Toorkistan, an event which gave new life to the efforts of the rebels.

10. In the meantime I had received so many distressful accounts from the General commanding of the state of our troops and cattle from want of provisions, and I had been so repeatedly apprised by him (for reasons which he

will himself doubtless explain) of the hopelessness of further resistance, that on the 24th ultimo, I deemed it my duty to address an official letter to him, a copy of which accompanies, as Appendix A.*

The General's reply was dated the same day; a copy accompanies, as Appendix B.

At my invitation, deputies were sent from the rebels, who came into cantonment on the 25th ultimo, I having in the meantime received overtures from them of a pacific nature, on the basis of our evacuating the country. I proposed to them the only terms which, in my opinion, could be accepted with honour; but the temper of the rebels may best be understood when I mention that they returned me a letter of defiance the next morning, to the effect that, unless I consented to surrender our arms, and to abandon his Majesty to his fate, we must prepare for immediate hostilities. To this I replied, that we preferred death to dishonour, and that it would remain with a higher Power to decide between us.

11. Affairs had attained so desperate a state on the 8th instant, that I again addressed the General a letter, copy of which accompanies, as Appendix C., and a copy of the General's reply of the same date, signed by three of his principal officers, accompanies as Appendix D. On the next day I received another letter from the General, copy of which is sent as Appendix E.

12. I had subsequently a lengthened correspondence with Mahomed Oosman Khan, Barukzye, the most moderate and sensible man of the insurgents, and as on the 11th instant we had not one day's provisions left, I held a conference with the whole of the rebel chiefs. The day previous I had learnt from a letter from Colonel Palmer, at Ghuznee, that there was no hope of reinforcements from Candahar. I had repeatedly kept his Majesty informed of the desperate state of our affairs, and of the probability that we should be compelled to enter into some accommodation with the enemy.

13. The conference with the rebels took place about a mile from cantonments. I was attended by Captains Law-

* The letters here alluded to are printed in the body of the work, or above, in the Appendix.—*Author.*

rence, Trevor, and Mackenzie, and there were present on the part of the rebels the heads nearly of all the chief tribes in the country. I had committed to paper certain propositions, to which I had reason to believe they would have no objection, and I read it to the meeting. A copy accompanies as Appendix F.* When I came to the second article, Mahomed Akbar interrupted me, and observed that we did not require supplies, as there was no impediment to our marching the next morning. I mention the above fact to show the impetuous disposition of this youth. He was reproved by the other chiefs, and he himself, except on this one occasion, behaved with courtesy, though evidently elevated by his sudden change of fortune.

14. The next day I was waited upon by a deputation from the chiefs, with a proposition that Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk should be left nominally as king—the Barukzye exercising the functions of minister; but this proposition, owing to the mutual jealousies of the parties concerned, as will appear in the sequel, fell to the ground.

15. From the foregoing review of occurrences, I trust it will be evident that I had no recourse left but that of negotiation; and I had ascertained beyond a doubt that the rebel chiefs were perfectly aware of our helpless situation, and that no terms short of our quitting Afghanistan would satisfy them.

16. The whole country, as far as we could learn, had risen in rebellion; our communications on all sides were cut off; almost every public officer, whether paid by ourselves or his Majesty, had declared for the new governor, and by far the greater number even of his Majesty's domestic servants had deserted him. We had been fighting for forty days against very superior numbers, under most disadvantageous circumstances, with a deplorable loss of valuable lives, and in a day or two we must have perished from hunger, to say nothing of the advanced season of the year, and the extreme cold, from the effects of which our native troops were suffering severely. I had been repeatedly apprised by the military authorities that nothing could be done with our troops; and I regret to add that desertions

* Given at pages 278, 279, 280.—*Author.*

to the enemy were becoming of frequent occurrence amongst our troops. The terms I secured were the best obtainable, and the destruction of fifteen thousand human beings would little have benefited our country, whilst our government would have been almost compelled to avenge our fate, at whatever cost. We shall part with the Afghans as friends, and I feel satisfied that any government which may be established hereafter, will always be disposed to cultivate a good understanding with us.

17. A retreat without terms would have been impracticable. It is true that, by entering into terms, we are prevented from undertaking the conquest of the entire country, a measure which, from my knowledge of the views of government, I feel convinced would never be resorted to, even were the means at hand. But such a project in the present state of our Indian finances, and the requisitions for troops in various quarters, I knew could not be entertained. If the expense already incurred in such a case would have been intolerable . . . [*Sentence imperfect.*]

18. I would beg leave to refer to the whole tenor of my former correspondence for the causes which have produced this insurrection. Independently of the genius of the people, which is prone to rebellion, we, as conquerors and foreigners, of a different creed, were viewed with particular disfavour by the chiefs, whilst the acts of some of us were particularly calculated to excite the general jealousy of a sensitive nation. The haughty demeanour of his Majesty was not agreeable to the nobles, and, above all, the measures of economy, to which it was found necessary to resort, were particularly galling.

Throughout this rebellion I was in constant communication with the Shah, through my assistant, Lieutenant J. B. Conolly, who was in attendance on his Majesty in the Balla Hissar. On the 18th inst. it was agreed upon that our troops should evacuate the Balla Hissar, and return to the cantonments, while the Barukzyes should have a conference with his Majesty with a view to his retaining the nominal powers of sovereignty, they for their own security placing a guard of their own in the upper citadel. No sooner, however, had our troops left the Balla Hissar, than

his Majesty, owing to some panic or misunderstanding, ordered the gate to be shut, and the proposed conference was thereby prevented. So offended were the Barukzyes, that they determined never to offer his Majesty the same terms again. In explanation of his conduct, his Majesty states that the party whom the Barukzyes desired to introduce was not that party which had been agreed upon.

His Majesty shut * * * *

True Copy.

(Signed) G. St. P. Lawrence, Capt.,
Mil. Sec., late Envoy and Minister.

[*MS. Records.*]

THE TREATY OF CAPITULATION.

[*Book VI., chapter II., pages* 320 *to* 326.]

[The following are translations of the different documents referred to in the above-mentioned chapter, marking the different stages of the treaty under which the English evacuated Caubul. No. I. is the draft of the original treaty which Macnaghten was negotiating at the time of his death. The articles, as proposed by the Afghan chiefs, are in inverted commas. The observations which follow, contain the assent of the English representative. And the *Remarks* in brackets are those of the Afghan chiefs; the original being in the hand-writing of Akbar Khan.]

No. I.

Rough Draft of the Treaty with the Assent of the English Authorities.

Article 1. "There shall be no delay in the departure of the English Army."

Agreed to. They will march twenty-four hours after having received a thousand carriage-cattle, which shall be either camels or yaboos.

[*Remark.* It rests with them (the English); let them pay the hire as they may be able.]

Article 2. "Afghan Sirdars shall accompany the army, to

prevent any one offering opposition, and to assist in procuring supplies."

It is very advisable.

[*Remark.* Sirdar Oosman Khan and Shah Dowlut Khan.]

Article 3. "The Jellalabad army shall march for Peshawur before the Caubul force starts."

It is agreed to. Do you name some person who shall accompany them.

[*Remark.* Abdool Ghuffoor Khan.]

Article 4. "The Ghuznee force, having made their preparations, shall speedily march to Peshawur by Caubul."

It is agreed to. Do you name some proper person to accompany them.

[*Remark.* A relation of the Naib or of Mehtur Moossa.]

Article 5. "The Candahar force, and all other British troops in Afghanistan, shall quickly depart for Hindostan."

It is agreed. Let proper people accompany them.

[*Remark.* Newab Jubbur Khan.]

Article 6. "The whole of the property of the Ameer (Dost Mahomed Khan) which is in the hands of the English Government, or of individual officers, shall be left behind."

It is agreed to. Whatever is with the public authorities is known to you; whatever is with private officers point out and take.

Article 7. "Whatever property belonging to the English cannot be carried away, shall be taken care of, and sent by the first opportunity."

It is agreed to: but we have given over all that remains to the Newab.

[*Remark.* The guns, ordnance stores, and muskets, must be given to me.]

Article 8. "In case Shah Soojah should wish to remain at Caubul, we will give him yearly a subsistence of a lakh of rupees."

It is agreed to. Do whatever you think advisable, wishing to show your friendship for us.

Article 9. "In case the family of Shah Soojah should be left behind, from want of carriage-cattle, we will fix the place now occupied by them in the Balla Hissar for their dwelling-place, until they can depart for Hindostan."

It is agreed to. The honour of the King is the honour of the Douranees; and it is becoming in you.*

Article 10. "When the English army arrives at Peshawur, arrangements shall be made for the march of Dost Mahomed Khan, and all other Afghans, with all their property, families, and children."

It is agreed to. They shall all be sent to you with honour and in safety.

Article 11. "When Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan and the others arrive safely at Peshawur, then the family of the Shah shall be at liberty to depart; that departing they may arrive at the place fixed upon."

It is agreed to.

Article 12. "Four English gentlemen shall remain as hostages in Caubul until Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan and the other Afghans shall have arrived at Peshawur, when the English gentlemen shall be allowed to depart."

It is agreed to.

[*Remark.* Let there be six hostages.]

Article 13. "Sirdar Mahomed Akbar Khan and Sirdar Oosman Khan shall accompany the English army to Peshawur, and take them there in safety"†

It is agreed to.

[*Remark.* Sirdar Mahomed Akbar Khan.]

Article 14. "After the departure of the English, friendly relations shall be continued,—*i.e.*, that the Afghan Government, without the consent and advice of the English Government, shall not form any treaty or connection with a foreign power; and should they (the Afghans) ever ask assistance against foreign invasion, the English Government will not delay in sending such assistance."

It is agreed to, as far as we are concerned; but in this matter the Governor-General of India alone has authority. We will do our best to bring about friendship between the two governments; and by the blessing of the Almighty this wish will be obtained, and friendship exist for the future.

* The 8th and 9th articles are scored out in the original by Akbar Khan, as though, on consideration, they were distasteful to him.

† This article is scored out in the original.

Article 15. "Any one who may have assisted Shah Soojah and the English, and may wish to accompany them, shall be allowed to do so. We will not hinder them. And if they remain here, no one will call them to account for what they have done, and no one shall molest them under any pretence. They may remain in this country like the other inhabitants." *

We have interpolated a few words, and it will be friendship if you comply with them.

Article 16. "Should any English gentleman unavoidably be detained, he shall be treated honourably until such time as he can depart."—[*MS. Records.*]

II.

[The following articles contain the further demands of the Afghans advanced after Macnaghten's death. The observations immediately following the articles are by the English negotiators. The *remarks* in brackets by the Afghans.]

Article 1. "Whatever coin there may be in the public treasury must be given up."

We have set apart two lakhs of rupees for our expenses to Peshawur, which is twenty-four yaboos' loads. If there is more than this in the public treasury, either in gold mohurs, ducats, or rupees, it is yours. If you do not believe this, send some one to note and inspect the loads on the day of our departure. If we have said truly, give us a blessing; and if we have spoken falsely, it is your property, take it away, and we shall be convicted of falsehood.

[*Remark.* Let them pay the hire of the yaboos and camels.]

Article 2. "With reference to the remark that was made that we should give up all our guns but six, we have with the force one and a-half companies of artillerymen. You have fixed six guns. Half of a company would remain

* The whole of this article also is scored out. Its provisions seem to have been extended, suggestively, by Pottinger, but disapproved by Akbar Khan.

without equipments. Be good enough to give three more small guns, such as are drawn by mules, for the other half-company. It will be a great kindness."

[*Remark.* They cannot be given.]

Article 3. "The muskets in excess of those in use with the regiments must be left behind."

This is agreed to. Whatever muskets are in addition to those in use with the regiments, together with shot and powder and other ordnance stores, all by way of friendship shall be the property of the Newab.

Article 4. "General Sale, together with his wife and daughter, and the other gentlemen of rank who are married and have children, until the arrival of the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan and the other Afghans and their families, and Douranees and Ghilzyes, from Hindostan, shall remain as guests with us; that when the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan shall have arrived, they also shall be allowed to depart with honour from Afghanistan."

General Sale is with the army in Jellalabad, the departure of which is fixed to take place previous to our arrival; and as for the other two or three gentlemen who are married and present here, we have sent a man to them. They, having seen their families, report that their families will not consent to this proposal; (adding) that you men may do as you like—no one can order us. This proposal is contrary to all order. We now beg you to be good enough to excuse the women from this suffering, and we agree to give as many gentlemen as you may wish for. In friendship, kindness and consideration are necessary, not overpowering the weak with sufferings. Since, for a long time past, we have shown kindness and respect to all Afghans of rank and consequence with whom we have had dealings, you should consider what we have done for them, and not forget kindness. As Shah Soojah was father of a family, and the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan was with his family, and no one gave them annoyance, and we showed them respect, you also now show similar kindness, that friendship may be increased.

[*Remark.* Let them remain with their families. Let the family of the General stop in Caubul, until he himself comes

from Jellalabad,—Sturt with his family, Boyd with his family, and Anderson with his family.]

ELDRED POTTINGER, Pol. Agent.
W. K. ELPHINSTONE, Major-Gen.*

III.

[The following is a draft of the new treaty submitted by the Afghan chiefs, containing the additional articles, and embodying the matter in Akbar Khan's "Remarks."]

Agreement of Peace that has been determined on with the Frank English gentlemen, to which engagement, if they consent and act accordingly, on the part of the heads and leaders of Afghanistan henceforward no infractions will occur to their friendly engagements.

1st. That the going of the gentlemen shall be speedy. In regard to the carriage-cattle, let them send money that they may be purchased and sent.

2nd. As regards the going of the Sirdars with the English army that no person may injure it on the way, Sirdar Mahomed Akbar Khan or Sirdar Mahomed Oosman Khan, whichever may be wished by the English, will be appointed and sent.

3rd. The army of Jellalabad shall march previous to the army of Caubul, and proceed to Peshawur. Sirdar Abdool Suffoor Khan having been appointed, will leave this and proceed, that he may previously accompany them; secondly, the road of Bhungush has been appointed.

4th. The Ghuznee force having got quickly ready will proceed by the road of Caubul to Peshawur. A relative of Naib Ameen-oollah Khan, with Mehtur Moosa Khan, has been appointed to accompany it.

5th. The army of Candahar and other parts of Afghanistan, wherever an army may be, will quickly depart for

MS. Records.

India. Newab Abdool Jubbar Khan has been appointed to carry this into effect.

6th. Whatever property of the Ameer may be with the English will be returned, and nothing retained.

7th. Whatever property of the English may be left for want of carriage will become the property of the Newab.

8th. If the family of Shah Soojah, on account of want of carriage, may remain here, they will be placed in the house of Hadjee Khan.

9th. Whenever the English army may arrive at Peshawur, they will make arrangements for the return of Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, the Afghans and their families, that are in India.

10th. That the English gentlemen, with their families, will be left at Caubul as hostages, until the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, with the rest of the Afghans and their families, may arrive at Peshawur; or, secondly, that six hostages may be left.

11th. After the departure of the English there shall be perfect friendship between the two states, in so much so that the Government of Afghanistan, without the advice and approval of the British Government, shall enter into no connection or correspondence with any other power; but if, in its defence, it may require the assistance of the English, they will not delay to afford it. Should the British Government not consent to this, the Afghans are free to make friends with any one they like.

12th. If any gentleman would wish to remain in Caubul, on account of his private affairs, he may do so, and will be treated with justice and respect.

13th. Whatever cash, whether gold or silver, may be in the treasury, shall be paid to Newab Zemaun Khan. A trustworthy person will be appointed, who will issue supplies from stage to stage as far as Peshawur.

14th. With regard to artillery, six guns have been determined on. They are enough. More will not be given. Secondly, the three mule guns will be given.

15th. The spare arms shall be given to Newab Mahomed Zemaun Khan.

16th. The hostages to be left here, and these persons

with their families—General Sale, Captains Sturt, Boyd, and Anderson.

17th. Let General Sale go with the army to Jellalabad, and his family remain here; after taking the army to Jellalabad, let him return to Caubul.

18th. If any of the Frank gentlemen have taken a Mussulman wife, she shall be given up.

If there may be questions about any article, send a note quickly by the bearer.—[*MS. Records.*]

IV.

THE RATIFIED TREATY.

Translation of a Treaty between the English Authorities at Caubul and the Afghan Nobles. (Dated in the month of Ze-vol-Kadh.)

The cause of writing this confidential paper, and the intention of forming this unparalleled friendly treaty, is this:—That at the present happy moment, to put away strife and contention, and avert discord and enmity, the representatives of the great English nation—that is, the high of rank and respected Eldred Pottinger, the ambassador and agent of the English Government, and General Elphinstone, the commander of the English forces—have concluded a comprehensive treaty containing certain articles, which they have confided to the hands of the Afghan nobility, that by it the chain of friendship may be strengthened. And it has been settled that the Afghan nobles shall give a similar writing.

An engagement is now made by his Majesty Newab Mahomed Zemaun Khan, King of Afghanistan, and Naib Ameen-oollah Khan, and the chief nobles of Afghanistan, whose seals are affixed to and ornament this document. The articles of the treaty are as follow:—

Article 1. That the British troops shall speedily quit the territories of Afghanistan and march to India, and shall not return; and twenty-four hours after receiving the carriage-cattle the army shall start.

Article 2. That on our part the Sirdars, Oosman Khan and Shoojah-ool-dowlah Khan, be appointed to accompany the before-mentioned army to the boundaries of Afghanistan and convey it to the boundary of the Sikh territory; so that no one shall offer molestation on the road; and that carriage-cattle and provisions may be procured for it.

Article 3. That the English force at Jellalabad shall march for Peshawur before the Caubul army arrives, and shall not delay on the road.

Article 4. Having brought the force at Ghuznee in safety to Caubul, under the protection of one of the relations of Naib Ameen-oollah Khan, we will send it to Peshawur unmolested under the care of another trustworthy person.

Article 5. Since, according to agreement the troops at Candahar and other parts of Afghanistan are to start quickly for India, and make over those territories to our agents, we on our part appoint trustworthy persons who may provide them with provisions and protection, and preserve them from molestation.

Article 6. All goods and property, and stores and cattle, belonging to Sirdar Dost Mahomed Khan, which may be in the hands of the English, shall be given up, and none retained.

Article 7. Six English gentlemen, who remain here as our guests, shall be treated with courtesy. When the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan and the other Afghans shall arrive at Peshawur, we will allow the above-mentioned English gentlemen to depart with honour.

Article 8. After the departure of the English army according to the treaty, should assistance against foreign invasion be at any time demanded, they (the English Government) shall not delay. Between (the Governments) friendship and good-will shall exist; and we will not make a treaty with any but the above-mentioned English Government. And in case the Governor-General of India should not agree to this proposal, we are at liberty to form an alliance with any other power.

Article 9. Should any English gentleman be unavoidably detained in Caubul, we will treat him with all respect and consideration, and on his departure dismiss him with honour.

Article 10. The English can take six horse-artillery guns and three mule guns, and the rest, by way of friendship, shall be left for our use. And all muskets and ordnance stores in the magazine shall, as a token of friendship, be made over to our agents.

Article 11. Such English soldiers as may be left sick or wounded at Caubul shall be at liberty to return to their own country on their recovery.

This is the treaty, the articles of which have been entered into between the nobles of the Mahomedan faith and the distinguished gentlemen. From which articles we will not depart. Written in the month of Ze-vol-Kadh, in the year of the Mahomedan faith 1257.

(Sealed)

MAHOMED ZEMAUN KHAN.	KHAN MAHOMED KHAN.
MEER HAJEE KHAN.	ABDOOL KHALIK KHAN.
SEKUNDUR KHAN.	AMEEN-OOLLAH KHAN.
DARWEESH KHAN.	MEER ASLAN KHAN.
ALLEE KHAN.	SUMUD KHAN.
MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN.	MAHOMED NASIR KHAN.
MAHOMED OOSMAN KHAN.	ABDOOLLAH KHAN.
GHOLAM AHMED KHAN.	GHUFFOOR KHAN.
GHOLAM MAHOMED KHAN.	MEER ALTEE KHAN.

[*MS. Records.*]

CONDUCT OF AKBAR KHAN ON THE RETREAT.

[*Book VI., chapter IV., page* 383.]

"At about nine A.M. the chiefs of the pass and of the country towards Soorkhab arrived, when we all sat down to discuss matters. The chiefs were most bitter in their expressions of hatred against us; and declared that nothing would satisfy them and their men but our extermination, and money they would not receive. The Sirdar, as far as words went, tried all in his power to conciliate them, and when other arguments failed, put them in mind of his father and the whole of his family being in the power of the British Government at Loodhianah, and that vengeance

would be taken by the latter in the event of mercy not being shown to us. Mahomed Shah Khan offered them 60,000 rupees on condition of our not being molested. After some time they took their departure, to consult with their followers; and Mahomed Shah Khan mentioned to me that he feared the chiefs would not, without some great inducement, resist the temptation of plunder and murder that now offered itself, and wound up by asking if we would give them two lakhs of rupees on condition of being allowed a free passage. I mentioned this to General Elphinstone, obtained his consent, and made known the same to Mahomed Shah, who went away and promised to return quickly. The General again begged of the Sirdar to permit him to return to his troops; but without avail."

"Until twelve o'clock crowds of Ghilzyes with their respective chiefs continued to pour in from the surrounding country to make their salaam to Mahomed Akbar; to participate in the plunder of our unfortunate people; and to revel in the delights of massacring the Europeans. From their expressions of hatred towards the whole race of us (whilst conversing in Persian, which they frequently did, until from a hint of the Sirdar they began to talk in Pushtoo, which I did not understand), they appeared to anticipate much more delight in cutting our throats than even in the expected booty. The Sirdar, to all appearance, but possibly only as a blind to his real feelings, whilst sitting with me endeavoured as much as possible to conciliate them. The reply in two instances was, 'When Burnes came into this country, was not your father entreated by us to kill him; or he would go back to Hindostan, and on some future day return with an army and take our country from us. He would not listen to our advice, and what is the consequence? Let us, now that we have the opportunity, take advantage of it and kill these infidel dogs.'"

"I must not omit to mention, that Mahomed Akbar Khan told me in the morning, after Mahomed Shah Khan had gone to consult with the chiefs of the pass, that the latter were dogs, and no faith to be placed in them; and begged that I would send for three or four of my most intimate friends, that their lives might be saved in the event

of treachery to the troops. My reply was that I would gladly do so, could my request be acceded to; but that the commanding-officer would never consent, and that the feelings of my friends would also be opposed to such a proceeding at a time of so imminent peril to their comrades. The Sirdar also proposed that in the event of the Ghilzyes not acceding to our terms, he would himself, with his party of horsemen, proceed at dusk to the foot of the hill, where our troops were bivouacked; and previous orders having been given by the commanding-officer that they should be held ready, he would bring away in safety every European, by desiring each of his horsemen to take up a man behind him; that the Ghilzyes would not fire on the Europeans for fear of hitting him or his men: but that he could not allow a single Hindostanee to follow, as it was impossible for him to protect 2000 people (our computed number). I mentioned this to the General; but it was deemed impracticable, as, from past experience, we had seen how impossible it was to separate the non-combatants from the fighting men. Four or five times during the day we heard the report of musketry, which appeared in the direction of our troops, but were always told, on making inquiry, that all fighting had ceased."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal.*]

END OF VOL. II.

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